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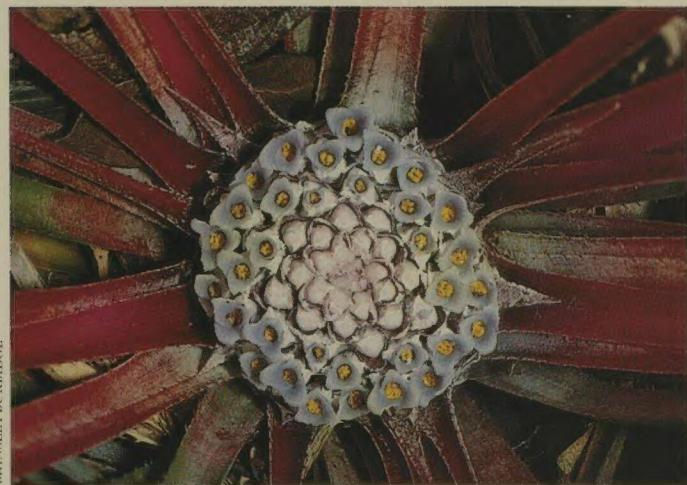
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Quality in an age of change.

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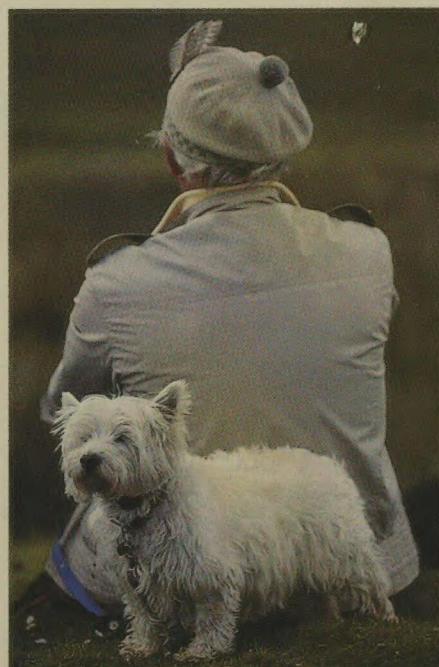
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Spring, 1993

Volume 281 No 7112

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Editorial Assistant Julia Pearey

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Listings contributors Angela Bird

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COVER: Inside the Palm House at Kew, by Lucy Willis. This artist's work can be seen at the Chris Beetles Gallery, 10 Ryder Street, London SW1

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ILN Subscription Dept,
Tower House, Sovereign Park,
Market Harborough,
Leicestershire LE16 9EF.
Tel: 0858 468888.
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Second-class postage paid at Rahway, NJ.
Postmaster: Address corrections to *The Illustrated London News*, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc, 2323 Randolph Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001, USA.
ISSN: 0019-2422.
Newstrade Distributor: Comag, Tavistock Road, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7QE.
Tel: 0895 444055.
Annual subscription rates:
United Kingdom £17.50
(\$33), Europe £20.50 (\$39),
USA (air-speeded delivery)
£20.50 (\$39), Canada
(air-speeded delivery) £23
(Can\$49), Rest of the
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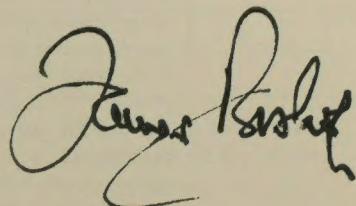
EDITOR'S LETTER

The end of the cold war, followed quickly by the successful international campaign to force Saddam's army out of Kuwait, raised hopes that a new world order was being put in place. The United Nations, freed of the inevitable Security Council veto by one or other of the great powers, was (or so it seemed for a few heady months) about to take its true place in the world. It could now become an effective arbiter of all international disputes, and have the strength to enforce its decisions. This has already proved to be over-optimistic. The need for international peacekeeping and the difficulties of providing it are being amply demonstrated by the grisly fighting within former Yugoslavia, the battles around the constituent parts of the old Soviet Union, the problems of providing aid for Somalia, the continuing provocations of Saddam.

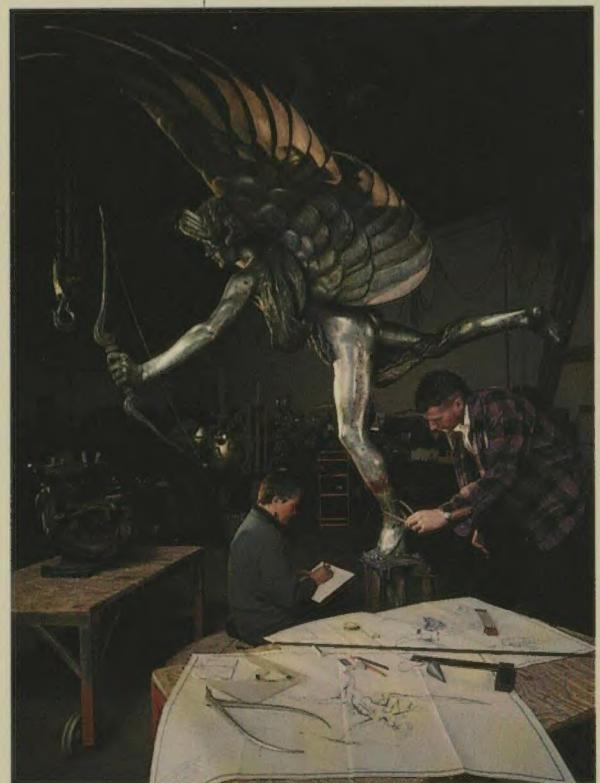
These events have drawn the world's attention to the limitations of current international peacekeeping and rescue operations. The world is understandably reluctant to get deeply involved in other people's squabbles which, for all its potential dangers, the Bosnian conflict is. Outside intervention in civil wars has seldom paid off, either in resolving the dispute or in stopping the fighting. Too often the peacemaker becomes the target, until such time as he departs, when the internal conflict may be resumed. The reports from Bosnia are grim, and the world is horrified by them and eager to put a stop to the fighting and the atrocities associated with it. But we must surely have learnt from the Congo, from Vietnam, from Lebanon, that open-ended commitment of outside forces, whether under the UN banner or not, generally fails to resolve fundamental ethnic disputes.

Hence the caution that has accompanied proposals to send in troops, even simply to protect UN aid convoys, and the peace plan put forward by Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, which would require international policing. However, the plan does depend on its acceptance by the three warring factions, and on a cease-fire that is more than just a gesture. Its chances of success have no doubt been greatly enhanced by President Clinton's decision to commit American ground troops to Bosnia, for it should convince all parties that they can expect no special American favours, as well as adding military credibility to the operation. That credibility will be further reinforced if Russian troops are added.

The Owen-Vance plan proposes 10 autonomous Bosnian provinces, a concept that is difficult to grasp, at least for those of us brought up on the idea of larger nation-states. If it meets with reality on the ground it may be the best long-term hope for peace, but only if the reality is accepted in advance. That is the importance of the Owen-Vance qualification. Sending in American, Russian, more British, and troops from any other nations who volunteer, to supervise and police 10 new provinces that have not been accepted by those who live there will be to condemn the troops to attack by either Serbs, Croats, Muslims or indeed all three. Occupation forces must have prior agreement, a clear objective and a limited commitment, or they risk becoming embroiled in civil war. Unless these conditions are met the UN would be reckless to intervene more forcefully, however frustrated the world may feel at the way Bosnians are bashing each other to bits.



NELSON'S COLUMN EROS DYING OF EXPOSURE



RICHARD WILIE

Andrew and Janet Naylor check the condition of Sir Alfred Gilbert's graceful "Angel of Christian Charity." The aluminium statue, better known as Eros, now appears to be in need of charity itself.

The Shaftesbury memorial, popularly but incorrectly known as Eros, erected in Piccadilly Circus almost a century ago and for many the symbol of London itself, is being repaired in a Midlands conservation studio. It may never return.

It was damaged in October, 1991, when someone swung on it—the latest in a long line of incidents. For conservationists and historians it was the last straw. Even the conservator now repairing it believes that if it is to survive much into the next century it should be kept in a museum.

The statue was removed last December, 14 months after the incident. The delay was caused partly by the drawn-out processes of tendering for a conservator, which took six months, and of acquiring listed-building consent from English Heritage, for the statue and its fountain constitute a Grade I listed building.

Each of the five restorations of Sir Alfred Gilbert's masterpiece so far undertaken has further weakened it, according to the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association, the society of historians, artists and conservators whose president is Sir Eduardo Paolozzi. It says that the monument is too important to put at risk again.

That the statue should not be replaced on its fountain, aiming its arrows south towards Whitehall, is unthinkable to Westminster Council, its owner, which is spending £30,000

on the restoration. Alex Segal, chairman of the council's planning and development committee, said that the sculpture was in remarkably good condition: "It's probably the best-known and best-loved statue in the country and it should return. It would be a terrible shame if it were shunted off into a museum."

When the statue was unveiled on June 29, 1893, the nakedness of the gleaming, gambolling youth offended some people and others felt that the philanthropist, the Earl of Shaftesbury, should have been commemorated with a conventional portrait. But Eros quickly became a familiar landmark. Gilbert wanted a polychromic effect, reflecting the orange-bronze of the fountain and the green of its basin. When the government reneged on its promise of gun-metal he turned to aluminium—he was the first to use it for a public statue—because of its bright colour as well as comparative cheapness. He used 98 per cent pure metal and employed the "lost wax" method of casting, perfected in 16th-century Rome by Benvenuto Cellini, which gives the most faithful rendering of the original model.

Andrew Naylor was commissioned by Westminster to restore the sculpture in time for the centenary and to submit a report on its condition. After his first study of X-ray photographs and the sculpture itself, he said: "Unless I can think of some solution, I can't in all conscience say that it can go out into Piccadilly again. I don't know how we can make it strong enough to withstand probable vandalous attacks other than caging the whole thing in."

To prevent damage by revellers, the monument is protected by hoardings on New Year's Eve, election nights and cup final nights.

Mr Naylor believes the only way it can be made strong enough is by cutting the figure into pieces and reassembling them around a new armature, making it still less the sculpture that Gilbert made. The council, angered by his early remarks, has now forbidden him to talk to the press, and even a visit by PMSA members was cancelled on the council's instructions. However, Jo Darke, chairman of the PMSA, has seen the sculpture.

The damage is a compounding of previous injury, the worst to the standing leg. There is a crazed fracture at the calf going two-thirds round on which there have been repair attempts with welding and studs. A bronze bar has been inserted into the foot to give new support, but with only partial success. The torso joins the leg at a Roman joint

in the thigh, which has bulged forward with the pressure on the back leg, forcing another crazed fracture. An attempt to mend this has been made at some stage using a cement mixture.

When it was last restored, nine years ago, at a cost of £1 million, the surface had become so corroded that it was destroyed with sand-blasting and Gilbert's famous patina replaced using Indian ink and lanolin; there are signs of new corrosion, although not so bad as had been feared.

The Tate Gallery considers the piece to be the masterwork of the leader of the *fin-de-siècle* New Sculpture movement. The keeper of the British Collection, Andrew Wilton, has written to Westminster saying Eros should go on permanent display in the Tate. "Their objection is that they don't want a plastic replica replacing Eros. But there can be no possible objection to a new cast being put in its place and the original coming here. Sadly, the original is clearly perishing while it stands in Piccadilly."

There are arguments for its going to the Victoria and Albert Museum, which has the national collection of sculpture and the original plaster model, or to the Museum of London. English Heritage says it needs to be convinced that Eros would be in serious danger if it went back. Meanwhile a copy made in the 1920s and mounted in Sefton Park, Liverpool, has been removed for restoration after it was damaged by vandals. When restored it will be displayed in the Walker Art Gallery and its place in the park will be taken by a stronger copy.

A cast in the same strength as this can be made for Piccadilly which would effectively be closer to the Gilbert piece unveiled 100 years ago than the figure languishing today in Mr Naylor's studio. In 1986 rubber moulds were made from the V&A's 15-piece plaster model which had been restored by the Fine Arts Society, the New Bond Street dealer that was Gilbert's agent, in return for permission to make 10 new casts.

Some of these casts are in Australia, the United States and Japan. Two have yet to be made; one of them could be specially set with a divided armature extending to the back leg as well as to the base for about £114,000. "While one can understand that the thought of a much-loved landmark disappearing after 100 years is distressing, to allow something to be destroyed because it has to be preserved is not sensible," Peyton Skipwith, of the Fine Arts Society, commented.

SIMON TAIT

TOWER OF FUN

Sir Hugh Casson likes things to be fun, and has contrived to inject that agreeable quality into all his many enterprises. The most obvious public example was the 1951 Festival of Britain, with which, as its director of architecture, he successfully cheered up a nation depressed by the unexpectedly long aftermath of war. He has always had a facility with watercolours and an eye for the bizarre.

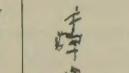
Both are well represented in a book, *The Tower of London—An Artist's Portrait*, just published by the Herbert Press in association with the Tower (£9.95). The drawings and watercolours skilfully capture the familiar sites and expose some unexpected delights such as a party of schoolgirls racing away to get into the New Armouries, a sleeping soldier in the Waterloo Block, a note in the window of Queen's House (occupied, for short spells, by Lady Jane Grey, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard) ordering "No Milk Today".

This artist's portrait of one of our grandest monuments is not a guidebook, but it will certainly brighten any visitor's view of the place. Most of the drawings are accompanied by engaging nuggets of information. Sir Walter Raleigh, after spending 13 years in the Bloody Tower writing his *History of the World*, had got as far as the Roman Empire when the time came for his execution. The 1,500 headless victims of the axe are buried beneath St Peter ad Vincula, a pretty Tudor building which seems "friendly and full of light". The giant codpiece of Henry VIII's armour used to be pricked by the pins of women desperate to conceive, until the practice was forbidden by the Church.

Such is the stuff, no doubt, that yeoman warders' tours are based on. Those now living in the Tower will surely be intrigued by the Casson interpretation of its grim history and its remarkable architectural images. Those who have thankfully stayed outside its walls may begin to wonder what they have been missing.



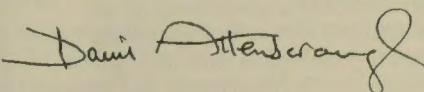
Hugh Casson provides new perspectives on the Tower, from the familiar sights, such as the revered, if ill-tempered, ravens and, below, the White Tower, to some of the eccentricities of this historic "microcosm of London".



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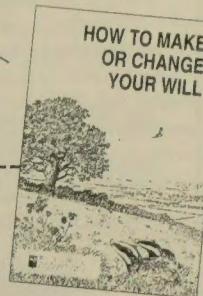
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NELSON'S COLUMN

EATING BY THE BOOKS

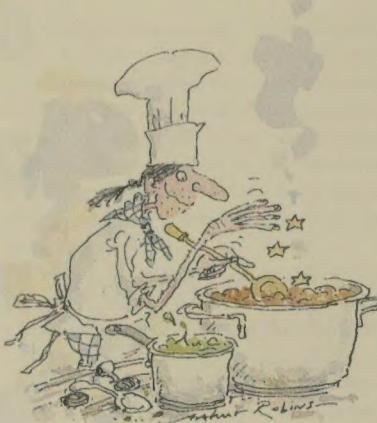
This year's batch of restaurant and food guides shows that in spite of the recession London remains remarkably active in the business of eating out. There are more than 50 new London entries in the 1993 *Good Food Guide*, for example, and some interesting new accolades in the *Michelin*, *AA* and *Egon Ronay* publications.

For serious eaters in the capital the major events have been the award of the coveted Michelin third star to La Tante Claire, in Chelsea, for which chef Pierre Koffmann has had to wait more than a decade. At the same time London's long-standing three-star establishment, Le Gavroche, has lost a star following the withdrawal of Albert Roux from day-to-day operation. His son Michel has taken over the cooking, and now has to earn the third star for himself.

All four guides seem agreed that the most interesting new restaurant in London is Pied-à-Terre, in Charlotte Street, which has been transformed from Indian cuisine to what *The Good Food Guide* calls "avant-garde European". Run by Richard Neat and David Moore, who have both worked for Raymond Blanc, it is clearly aimed at the quality market (set dinner is £36), and the food justifies the price. *Michelin* gives the restaurant a one-star rating, the *AA* describes it as "possibly the best new restaurant in London", and *Egon Ronay* comments that "fancy flourishes play no part" in the dishes on Neat's short, fixed-price menu, but that "he challenges himself with sophisticated, adventurous dishes, and mainly succeeds".

Four other new London restaurants capture the attention: Les Saveurs, in Curzon Street; The Square, in King Street, St James's; La Sémillante, in Mill Street, Mayfair; and Snows on the Green, Shepherd's Bush Road.

At Les Saveurs Joël Antunès, the



former *chef de cuisine* at the Bangkok Oriental, presides over a menu that is basically French spiced with some oriental touches. Set dinner is £39.50, but there is a set lunch for £21 which *Egon Ronay* recommends as good value. The cooking is described by *The Good Food Guide* as "clever and interesting", and the *AA* notes that the staff are "very attentive, helpful and extremely knowledgeable".

The Square is another potential high-flier, "off to a cracking start", according to *Egon Ronay*. The chef is Philip Howard, who has worked at Harveys and Bibendum, and he cooks in voguish modern style, strongly influenced by southern France and Italy. *The Good Food Guide* notes that the place has suffered from too many customers, probably because the prices are reasonable for this part of London, so booking seems essential.

La Sémillante occupies a basement off New Bond Street and is run by Patrick Woodside, another chef who once worked at Harveys and also at La Tante Claire and Claridge's. With such a pedigree his cooking is bound to be exciting, and both *The Good Food Guide* and *Egon Ronay* find it so (the restaurant is not yet in the other two guides). He works to a fixed-price

menu (set dinner £26, lunch £14.50), and the wine list is "sensibly priced" and "as modern as the menu".

Snows on the Green is run by Sebastian Snow, who worked with Antony Worrall-Thompson at 190 Queen's Gate; the green of the title is Brook Green. The menu has strong Mediterranean influence—*soie gras* with fried egg and balsamic vinegar, *brandade crostini*, *gnocchi* with *pesto*. *The Good Food Guide* complains of excess of richness through lack of balance, but points out that they also do great steak and chips. The guides note a short, fairly-priced wine list.

As usual with these guides there are some entertaining comments and opinions not directly related to particular restaurants. *Egon Ronay* again raises the vexed question of service charges: "Why, oh why, can't we pay an inclusive price for a meal, as on the Continent? 10 per cent, 12.5 per cent, 15 per cent, optional, automatically added, gratuities at your discretion, etc have no place on bills. The customer is not interested in how restaurant staff are paid, only in what he or she is going to pay."

The Good Food Guide fills in odd spaces with its readers' experiences: "... ordered a meat balti which was brought as usual sizzling to the table. Unfortunately the meat was in clumps which were hot on the outside and cold in the middle. They don't appear to be taking enough care with defrosting," came a report from Birmingham. Another, from Sussex, recorded the remark: "Our chef can't be expected to put your dessert in the oven now. He's busy with the main courses."

Customers can also behave oddly, as the *AA* demonstrates by publishing a summary of reports from some 500 hotels. Towels, teaspoons, ashtrays, pictures, kettles and televisions are among items most often stolen; night-dresses, cosmetics, jewellery and pornographic magazines among things most frequently left behind. A 12-bore shooting rifle was left in one hotel, a sack containing poisonous snakes in another, a stuffed baby elephant in a third and the cremated remains of a relative in a fourth. Under the heading of "strange items" were 47 vibrators, 15 blow-up dolls and a pair of strawberry-flavoured edible underpants. *AA Hotels & Restaurants in Britain & Ireland 1993*, £12.99.

Egon Ronay's Cellnet Guide to Hotels & Restaurants 1993, £13.99.
The Good Food Guide 1993, Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99.
Michelin 1993 Hotel & Restaurant Guide: Great Britain and Ireland, £10.50.

As well as reviewing restaurants the guides include reader comments and odd customer behaviour, such as leaving a bag of snakes behind.



CHELSEA GALA



Cicely Mary Barker's Flower Fairies, above and below, this year's RHS royal gala preview theme.

Keen gardeners and horticulturists can beat the crowds to the Chelsea Flower Show this year by buying tickets to the royal gala preview to be held in the presence of Princess Margaret on May 24. The evening viewing, just after the judging, will give guests the chance to stroll around at a leisurely pace, a glass of champagne in one hand and a canapé in the other, to admire the flowers at their blooming best. They will also be supporting two good causes—the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Royal Horticultural Society.

Now in its fifth year, the gala aims to raise £750,000 for these deserving charities. Of the NSPCC, appeals director Giles Pegram says that it acts as a voice for children, helping neglected and abused children all over the United Kingdom. It receives very little government funding or grants, so relies on events like this for its income. The RHS, founded in 1804 and recognised as the world's leading horticultural organisation, believes in maintaining the highest standards, selecting only the best exhibitors for its shows. Expect to see the most exciting new varieties of plants and the latest gardening equipment.

The NSPCC has chosen Cicely Mary Barker's charming Flower Fairies illustrations, originally published between 1923 and 1948, as its theme for the gala and a complete set of Flower Fairies books, republished by Frederick Warne & Co in 1990, will be presented to a lucky raffle winner. Around

100 other prizes include a champagne balloon flight, RHS membership, and dinner for two at the Savoy; and four flower pictures painted by Roy Petley specially for the event are to be auctioned.

Guests will be able to discuss their own gardening projects and problems with the exhibitors. A specially-commissioned garden by Peter Rogers will symbolise a child stepping away from a life of abuse and facing the world with the NSPCC's help. Other displays will include a garden built in homage to Gertrude Jekyll for the 150th anniversary of her birth and another showing the delights of creating landscapes using only miniature varieties of plants.

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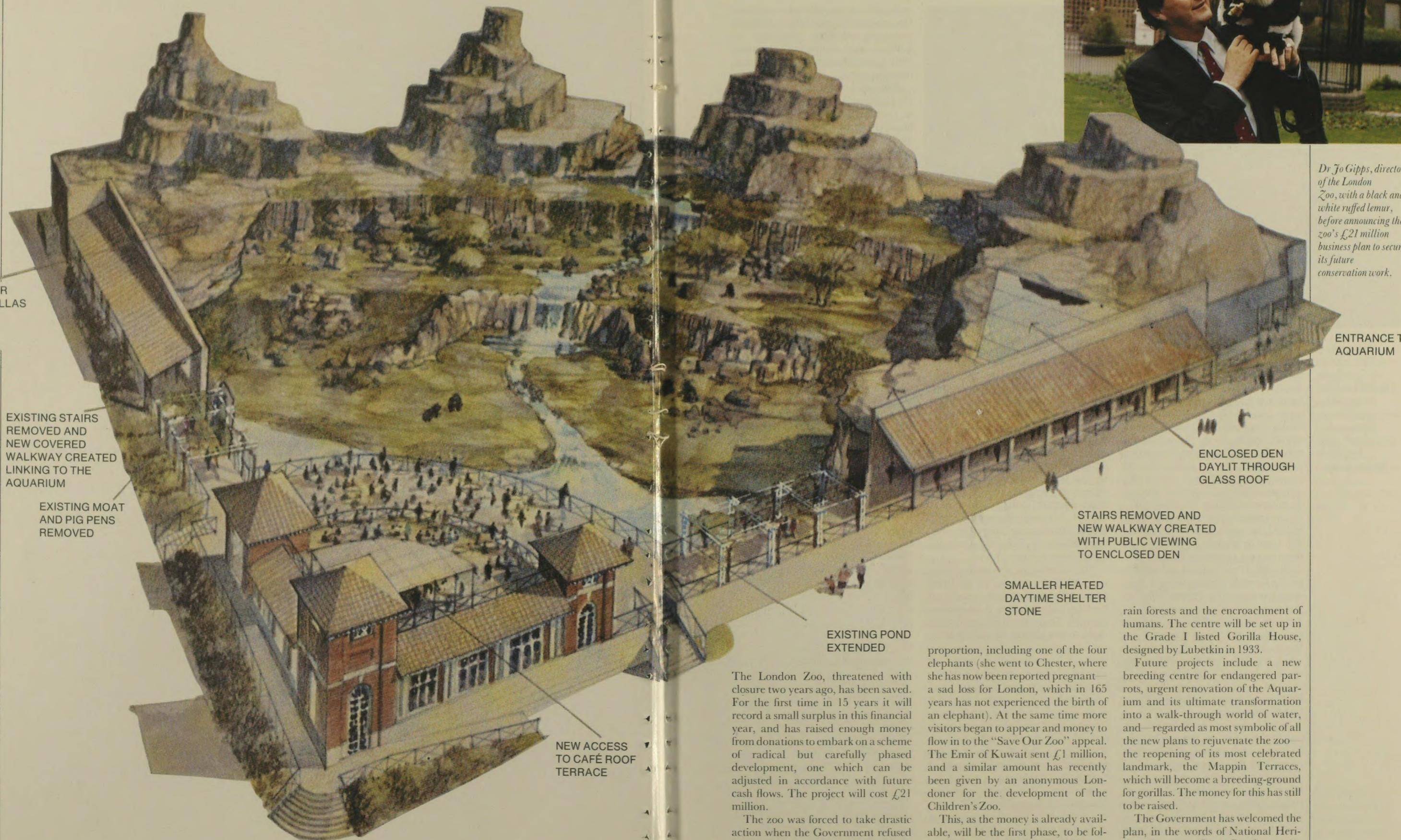
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NELSON'S COLUMN

THE ZOO SURVIVES

The Mappin Terraces have been empty since the bears left eight years ago. They are now to be restructured as a new breeding-ground for gorillas, with plenty of outdoor space.



The London Zoo, threatened with closure two years ago, has been saved. For the first time in 15 years it will record a small surplus in this financial year, and has raised enough money from donations to embark on a scheme of radical but carefully phased development, one which can be adjusted in accordance with future cash flows. The project will cost £21 million.

The zoo was forced to take drastic action when the Government refused to contribute to its running costs after a final subvention of £10 million in 1988. Staff was cut by about a quarter and the animals reduced by a similar

proportion, including one of the four elephants (she went to Chester, where she has now been reported pregnant—a sad loss for London, which in 165 years has not experienced the birth of an elephant). At the same time more visitors began to appear and money to flow in to the "Save Our Zoo" appeal. The Emir of Kuwait sent £1 million, and a similar amount has recently been given by an anonymous Londoner for the development of the Children's Zoo.

This, as the money is already available, will be the first phase, to be followed by the Madagascar Centre, designed to highlight the island's unique habitat and wildlife, threatened by the destruction of the



Dr Jo Gipps, director of the London Zoo, with a black and white ruffed lemur, before announcing the zoo's £21 million business plan to secure its future conservation work.

rain forests and the encroachment of humans. The centre will be set up in the Grade I listed Gorilla House, designed by Lubetkin in 1933.

Future projects include a new breeding centre for endangered parrots, urgent renovation of the Aquarium and its ultimate transformation into a walk-through world of water, and—regarded as most symbolic of all—the new plans to rejuvenate the zoo—the reopening of its most celebrated landmark, the Mappin Terraces, which will become a breeding-ground for gorillas. The money for this has still to be raised.

The Government has welcomed the plan, in the words of National Heritage Secretary Peter Brooke, as "a sound basis for negotiations over a new lease in Regent's Park". The zoo's present lease runs out in two years.

NELSON'S COLUMN SOCIETY OF LATERAL THINKING



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS LIBRARY

Prince Albert distributes prizes in the Great Room of the RSA in 1844. He became the society's president the previous year, initiating the royal link that is still strong today.

On March 22, 1754, in a coffee-house in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce came into being. A group of "Noblemen, Clergy, Gentlemen and Merchants" resolved to establish a society whose objects were: "to embolden enterprise; to enlarge science; to refine art; to improve our manufactures; and to extend our commerce". Its driving spirit was William Shipley, an obscure drawing-master from Northampton.

The society gained its royal charter in 1847, by which time Prince Albert had been its president for four years, but it was not granted its "Royal" title until 1908. It was the initiator of plans for the Great Exhibition of 1851. The royal link continues. Prince Philip has just completed 40 years as president, and to mark this the RSA - as it is now generally called - invited him to give the inaugural lecture of a series for which he will thereafter choose the speakers. In July he and the Queen will visit an exhibition celebrating the RSA's work during the Duke of Edinburgh's presidency.

In its early years the society placed much emphasis on promoting inventions and discoveries. Shipley, concerned with the plight of poor weavers, persuaded it to offer a prize or "premium" to encourage the production of cobalt in Britain and the home cultivation of madder. These two ingredients, then expensively imported, were vital for dyes which the weavers needed for their livelihood. The society championed the development of new crops, including potatoes suitable for

the table rather than for animal fodder, and safety devices like masks for workers handling mercury.

One spectacular promotion concerned an early fire extinguisher known as Fire Watch. Invented by Ambrose Godfrey, it consisted of explosive balls which, when thrown into a fire, scattered a fire-quenching or "suffocating" liquid over the flames. In 1761 the society specially erected a three-storey building and set it on fire to demonstrate Godfrey's invention. It worked extremely efficiently, to the satisfaction of a huge crowd, but, alas, this impressive demonstration did little to increase its use.

The imperatives of science, invention and commerce on the one hand and social and moral improvement on the other were thus from the first cross-fertilised. Today the RSA is still dedicated to this kind of lateral thinking, seeking to make fruitful connections between, for instance, the arts and industry, industry and the environment, education and industry, and education and the economy. For that to continue, says its present director, Christopher Lucas, the diverse backgrounds of the 15,000 fellows of the RSA are crucial. He describes the membership as being made up of "scientists, architects, musicians, accountants, structural engineers, designers, business people and everything else. We think that is essential to what we call 'crossing frontiers'."

The RSA's ruling council deliberately reflects this mix: a random sample includes a forester, an accountant, the chairman of Boots, a designer

and maker of stained glass, a one-time Downing Street press officer, teachers and educationalists, professors of building and continuing education with, scattered among them, company directors galore.

This potent mixture was noted by Dr Jonathan Miller, the arts director and neuro-psychologist, in 1990 when he received the RSA's Albert Medal for his outstanding contribution to arts and science. There was a broad ridge of fibres, he said, passing from the left brain (science) to the right brain (arts), called the *corpus callosum*, which guaranteed cross-talk between the two sections. He believed that one of the glories of the society was "to be the *corpus callosum* of modern England".

The mix has been the dynamo for one of the RSA's principal current projects, Tomorrow's Company, which rests on the belief that businesses need to look beyond short-term profit levels. As RSA council member Richard Onians, founder and a director of Baring Venture Partners, put it recently in the *RSA Journal*, in the 1970s "many senior executives and directors came to realise that there may be more than one 'bottom line'". For longer-term success they need to take account of the communities in which they operate and the demands of consumers, employees, environmentalists and equal-opportunities lobbyists as well as shareholders.

The problems involved in adopting such a view form part of the RSA's three-year inquiry, which has drawn impressive backing from a wide range of organisations. In addition to Onians's company, a score of others are chipping in with £10,000 a year each; they range from manufacturing businesses like Thorn EMI, Cadbury and IBM UK (whose chairman, Sir Anthony Cleaver, is heading the inquiry) to Cable & Wireless, the National Grid Company, Kleinwort Benson Investment Management and the Henley Centre for Forecasting.

The presence of such a project in the RSA's programme dispels any notion that the society (which many people often misleadingly call the "Royal Society of Arts") confines itself to "the arts". The way in which such RSA initiatives can alter the climate of opinion among the general public and decision-takers is evidenced by an earlier exercise initiated by the Duke of Edinburgh. In the early 1970s he led a series of conferences under the title 'The Countryside in 1970.'

After the final conference, Prince Philip recalls, there was much debate about what to do next. Rather than set

up a costly new organisation the RSA, which had played an important role in the conferences, offered to provide a base for continuing discussion and review of environmental concerns, and set up an environment committee. "I believe," Prince Philip has written, "that this role has enabled the committee to make a very significant contribution to the understanding of the issues and to spark appropriate action, without becoming directly involved with particular interests or points of view. There is a very important place for pressure groups and special interest organisations, but there is also a need for debate and objective assessment."

In March, 1988, these conferences were followed up with the launch of the Future Countryside Programme. A lecture by Prince Philip at the RSA inaugurated a series of some 16 conferences and seminars culminating in *A Brief for the Countryside in the 21st Century*, a conference intended to pinpoint the pressures affecting the countryside of England and Wales and to offer some solutions.

Prince Philip has been much involved in the RSA's environmental work generally, and is president of its



JULIAN CALDFER

environment committee, which was responsible for the RSA's Better Environment Awards for Industry. These awards paved the way for the government-sponsored Queen's Award for Environmental Achievement, announced last year, leaving the RSA to turn its energies to a new award for good environmental management. This, says Christopher Lucas, is the way the RSA has always operated: "starting something, working it up, then handing it over for long-term superintendence to a more appropriate body, and turning to fresh woods and pastures new." He explains: "The society is a forum in which dilemmas are faced."

The RSA's character derives in no small measure from its offices, in reality five mid-18th-century houses built by Robert Adam as part of his and his brothers' ambitious Adelphi development between the Thames and the Strand. The centre point, the Royal Terrace fronting the river, was demolished in the 1930s, but of the neighbouring Adam houses two of the five, Nos 8 and 6 John Adam Street, were designed especially for the society, which moved there in 1774. These Grade I listed buildings, all now owned freehold by the RSA, were the subject of a bold but sympathetic upgrading three years ago.

This scheme, designed by Green Lloyd Architects, opened up and transformed the extensive vaults below the houses, previously let out to wine merchants. It has given the society not only a fine new fellows' restaurant and bar, but new spaces for meetings,

seminars and conferences, exhibition gallery space and a second entrance on the building's north side towards the Strand. These new spaces are reached by lifts fitted cunningly into the complex and an atrium created out of what was a dingy back court and light-well.

The redevelopment of the society's house did appear financially threatening. The cost of the scheme escalated from the £4.2 million originally envisaged to £5.1 million. But fellows, companies and foundations rallied round to the tune of £3 million, with the remaining capital debt converted into a loan repayable over 18 years.

At one stage Christopher Lucas was worried that financial constraints might curtail the breadth of activities which is the RSA's strength. Instead the breadth has been retained but the focus sharpened. Revenue improves steadily. The vaults, by providing more lettable space for non-RSA conferences and promotions, have increased its income. After a couple of worrying years the RSA is now producing a healthy operating surplus and is well on course to pay off the capital debt.

One of the society's staples is the £230,000 a year it receives in royalties from the RSA Examinations Board, now an independent though closely linked operation based in Coventry. The board processes more than one million examination entries a year in such subjects as business and administration, information technology, teaching and training, languages, and retail and basic business skills.

TONY ALDOUS

RSA director Christopher Lucas addresses an audience in the Great Room, which is dominated by six wall-paintings showing the progress of civilisation that were executed for free by James Barry between 1777 and 1783.



JOHN ADAM STREET

Left, vaults below the society's Adam-designed offices now serve as meeting-rooms, gallery space and a superb bar and fellows' dining-room.

NELSON'S COLUMN THE THAMES'S FIRST TUNNEL



Crowds lined the streets, bells rang out and flags were hoisted in Rotherhithe on a Saturday afternoon 150 years ago. The occasion on March 25, 1843 was the opening of the Thames Tunnel. Top-hatted dignitaries descended a grand staircase and walked 100 yards to Wapping and back.

Fifty thousand people passed through the tunnel in the first 24 hours, and more than a million visitors came in the first year. Queen Victoria, who had viewed the works as a girl, sailed to Wapping on the royal barge in July and with Prince Albert walked through the tunnel to Rotherhithe.

The idea of a tunnel had preoccupied engineers for some time. Goods landed at the new London docks took almost a day to reach south London in a long detour over London Bridge, but a bridge closer to the docks would impede tall-masted ships entering the Pool of London. Previous attempts to drive tunnels between Gravesend and Tilbury and between Rotherhithe and Limehouse had failed.

The H.N described Brunel's Thames Tunnel at its opening in early 1843 as the "most wondrous of all London's wonders". This was the first tunnel anywhere in the world ever to have been constructed beneath a navigable river.

of the face unsupported at any time.

At first the tunnel fascinated people. It became one of the fashionable sights of London. A huge crowd assembled in Rotherhithe in March, 1825, to see Brunel cement the first brick with a silver trowel. To produce income, spectators were charged a shilling, and on some days as many as 700 people came to view, among them the Duke of Wellington. "Some public singers," Brunel wrote in his diary in April, 1827, "went into the tunnel and gave a very good entertainment." Special songs and a waltz were composed and there was even a musical, *The Thames Tunnel, or Harlequin Excavator*.

But there were serious setbacks over the years. Money ran out, and a cut in miners' wages led to a strike causing "scenes of riot and confusion". Water poured in. The newly-appointed resident engineer, Brunel's 21-year-old son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, organised repairs. Marc Brunel, weighed down by the pressure of worry, had a stroke. *The Times*, which had heralded the tunnel as a "great national enterprise", now changed its tune and referred to "the Great Bore".

Anxious to restore confidence in the project, Brunel organised a banquet in the tunnel in November, 1827. The band of the Coldstream Guards played operatic numbers, and 120 workers drank a toast "To our tools!". (This year, in November, as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations, a

dinner will again be held in the tunnel.)

Worse was to come. A second flood killed six miners and almost drowned Isambard. An attempt to raise more capital failed and in August, 1828, the tunnel was bricked up.

In 1835 the government provided enough money to restart the project, and tunnelling was resumed in 1836, though problems still abounded. There were three more floods and a further fatality before Wapping was finally reached. When contact with the other side was first made in June, 1840, Sir Marc Brunel's three-year-old grandson walked through the hole into the arms of a Rotherhithe miner.

The tunnel was a major triumph of British engineering, its progress followed with interest in England and throughout Europe. *The Illustrated London News* was not alone in claiming that it "would long rank as the eighth wonder" of the world.

But, however grand the achievement, the tunnel was a financial failure. It was never used as planned, largely because insufficient money was raised to build the spiral ramps at either end to allow carriages and goods vehicles to pass through to the docks. The public soon tired of it and local people went back to the ferry rather than climb the long staircases.

In an attempt to drum up income the tunnel was filled with stalls. "Thames Bazaars" and illuminated anniversary fêtes were held. A "Grand Moving Panorama" was an attraction, while "Forrester's Troop of Animals, with Dancing and Performing Horses" topped the entertainments in 1858. But "tunnel thieves" mugged passers-by at night, prostitutes accosted men, and down-and-outs took refuge in the arches. In 1865 the tunnel was bought by the East London Railway Company, later absorbed into London Underground, and today, the walls dripping visibly, it forms part of the Shoreditch to New Cross line.

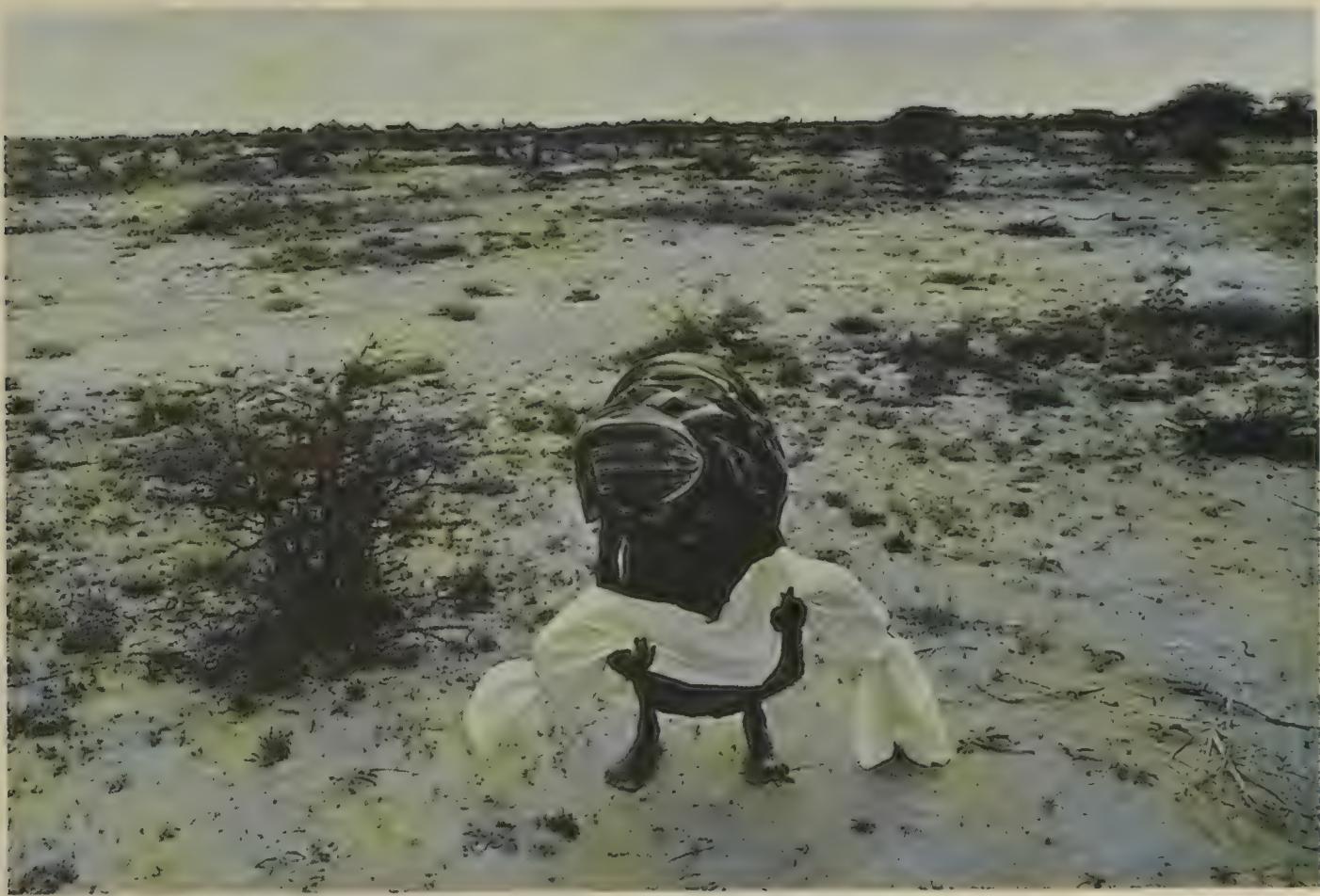
To celebrate the Thames Tunnel's 150th anniversary and to mark the opening of the link with Europe under the Channel, it is hoped to run a train in December from Haqueville, Marc Brunel's birthplace in Normandy, through to Rotherhithe. This year will also see the chimney-stack restored to the engine-house Brunel built in Rotherhithe for the steam engines used to drain the tunnel. Today this is a small museum with an exhibition describing the building of the tunnel and the influence Sir Marc Brunel has had on modern tunnelling. It is open on the first Sunday of each month.

DENISE SILVESTER-CARR



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WORLD PRESS PHOTOS



The awards for the World Press Photo contest for 1992 were announced in February and were chosen from 19,428 entries submitted by 1,966 photographers from 87 countries. Some of the winning photographs are shown on this and the following two pages, including the overall winner, which was taken by James Nachtwey, of Magnum Photos, USA. The Leica Oskar Barnack Award, for a picture-story best expressing the positive relationship between man and his environment, was also won by a Magnum photographer, Eugene Richards.

Prizes in 16 categories were won by photographers from 15 countries—Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, Peru, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and the United States. Nachtwey receives a cash prize of 15,000 Dutch guilders (£5,770), Richards 10,000 guilders and winners of the other categories receive 2,500 guilders. The prizes will be presented in Amsterdam in April.

JAMES NACHTWEY

Above, a woman picking up a child to take to its grave in Bardera, Somalia, in November, 1992, chosen by the judges as the World Press Photo of 1992. Nachtwey works for Magnum Photos, USA.

BOJAN STOJANOVIC

Below, "Execution in Bosnia"—one of many horrific events captured by photographers working in Bosnia in 1992. Chosen by the judges as winning photograph in the Spot News category for 1992.



WORLD PRESS PHOTOS

PAUL LOWE

Below, Somalia in August, 1992, chosen by the judges as the winner in the General News Stories category. Lowe works for Network Photographers in the UK and was the only photographer to win more than one category (see photograph below left).



PAUL LOWE

Left, radiation victims in Kazakhstan, winner of the Nature and Environment Stories category, taken by the British photographer for Network Photographers.



BOURSEILLER/WILDENBERG

Above, "Glacial Memories, Greenland", awarded third prize in the Science and Technology Stories category, taken by the French photographers Philippe Bourseiller and Arnaud de Wildenberg.

DOMINIK OBERTREIS

*Below, "Talent School, Beijing", winner of the top award in the Sports Stories category.
The photographer, Dominik Obertreis, was working for Visum in Germany. Second prize in this category went to David Modell of the UK.*



P. F. BENTLEY

Right, Clinton campaigning in 1992, by an American photographer for Time magazine, awarded second prize for the People in the News Stories.



CHRISTINA GARCIA RODERO

Above, San José Festival, Valencia, Spain, taken by a Spanish photographer from Agence Vu, France, for Life magazine, chosen by the judges as winner of the top award in the Arts category.

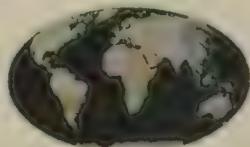


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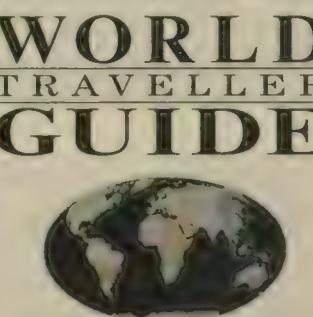
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*IRINA GORCHAKOVA
AS RENATA IN
‘THE FIERY ANGEL’:
A DRAMATIC
SOPRANO WHOSE
POTENTIAL
SEEMS LIMITLESS*

DIVAS FOR TOMORROW

HUGH CANNING FINDS A WEALTH OF EMERGING TALENT AMONG THE YOUNG SINGERS OF TODAY. PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONALD COOPER.

Public fascination with the glamour and prowess of the prima donna—the opera diva or goddess—has persisted probably since the birth of the art-form in 17th-century Florence. A handful of singers became legends in their own lifetimes. These included the beautiful, but in later life plump and pleasing, Mrs Billington, Maria Malibran and her sister Pauline Viardot-Garcia, and Adelina Patti. Elizabeth Billington, dubbed “a cherub of notorious obesity” by the lampoonists, was London’s favourite home-grown prima donna in the latter half of the 18th century. In the 19th century, as opera

gradually pervaded the consciousness and drained the pockets of the growing middle class, a succession of Continental sopranos, mezzo-sopranos and contraltos vied for the public’s favour: Malibran, favourite of Bellini and Donizetti, died after a riding accident in Manchester aged 28; Viardot-Garcia became the muse of Berlioz, Saint-Saëns and Liszt and the lover of Turgenev; Patti, Queen Victoria’s favourite singer, reigned at Covent Garden for almost 35 years.

In our time the most enduring image of the prima donna is that of the Greek-American soprano Maria Callas, known to a far larger public than thronged to see her at the world’s great opera-houses for

her temperamental persona. Countless sopranos, and even mezzos, have been hailed, erroneously, as the new Callas, often to their detriment.

The delectable, raven-haired, 27-year-old Italian mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli has been hailed as one such by journalists who lack any other yard-stick for a singer with ravishing dark looks, a modern and expensive dress sense, a sparkling personality and a voice which—on record at least—makes strong men go weak at the knees. Bartoli is already widely acclaimed as a star her series of solo albums for Decca is, by and large, an artistic, as well as a commercial success—but she has yet to prove



OLGA BORODINA
AS DALILA:
A DARK, RICH MEZZO
VOICE FULL OF
LUSTROUS COLOURS



JANICE WATSON
AS ADELE
IN THE COUNT ORY:
A HANDSOME
PRESENCE AND LARGE
LYRIC VOICE

herself in the big opera-houses where divas such as Callas, Joan Sutherland and Montserrat Caballé are made.

It is often asserted that opera singing is in a state of crisis. Where, the connoisseurs ask, are the great Verdi sopranos? Who are the true Wagnerian heroes and heroines? It is certainly the case that some operas—Verdi's *Aida* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*—have become almost impossible to cast today at the very highest level, but nonetheless there is a wealth of emerging talent, particularly among young sopranos, mezzos and contraltos, who have not only beautiful voices but dramatic stage personae and good looks. Today's audiences, especially those watching at home on television or video, expect romantic operatic heroines to resemble their soap-operatic counterparts or the stars of stage and screen.

But an ample figure has never been a hindrance to the career of the finest dramatic singers—look at Mrs Billington, Madame Caballé or the much-loved English National Opera soprano of the 1970s Rita Hunter—and nor should it. The young English soprano Jane Eaglen is one of the more statuesque of the bright young generation, though still modestly proportioned beside some of America's new breed of monster divas, but hers is such an exciting voice that her international career is already well

advanced. In recent seasons she has sung Mozart's Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* and Electra in *Idomeneo* at the Vienna State Opera, and Mathilde in Rossini's *William Tell* both in Geneva and at the Royal Opera House. She is destined for the major dramatic parts of the Italian and German repertoires.

In Eaglen's début at English National Opera in 1984 she stood out from a band of "rapturous maidens" in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience* as a Lady Ella of Wagnerian physical stature, with a huge, penetrating, silver-toned voice, clashing a pair of cymbals with terrifying comic menace. She has gradually developed her technique, and her voice has grown in power and beauty, with roles such as Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Eva in Wagner's *Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, and Donnas Elvira and Anna in *Don Giovanni*. Her Anna at the Coliseum two seasons ago was one of the most thrilling I have heard in 20 years of opera-going—a true dramatic soprano with breath-taking agility. For Scottish Opera she has also sung Mimi in *La Bohème*—though she could hardly be dramatically convincing as Puccini's fragile consumptive—Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, and a hugely promising Brünnhilde in Wagner's *Die Walküre* last year. Many who heard her suggested she had taken on the mantle of Rita Hunter whose large, yet sweet, dramatic soprano

Eaglen's resembles in the heroic Wagnerian roles, though she has since decided to leave Brünnhilde to senior colleagues for the time being. A wise head sits on young shoulders. She will, however, accept Italian opera's ultimate challenge when she sings Bellini's Norma—a role conquered by Rosa Ponselle and Callas but precious few others in our century—with Scottish Opera in April, May and June.

Another young British soprano on the threshold of a major international career is Janice Watson. Since winning the 1989 Kathleen Ferrier Award, Watson has emerged as one of the finest young lyric sopranos of her generation. Although her work in Britain has centred on Welsh National Opera, with whom she has sung Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and Fiordiligi in *Così*, Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, and Countess Adèle in Rossini's *The Count Ory*, she has been seen twice as Musetta in *La Bohème* at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Her handsome presence and large lyric voice suggest a number of possibilities in the Italian or German repertoires. In the coming summer she can be heard around Britain as Tatyana in WNO's new production of *Eugene Onegin* and she will make her début at the San Francisco Opera as Richard Strauss's Daphne, an arduous assignment for a young singer, but one that should display



JENNIFER LARMORE
AS ROSINA:
A LOW, RICH MEZZO
DESTINED FOR
THE FLORID, LYRIC
REPERTORY

the opulence of her voice. Later in the year she will follow in the footsteps of Joan Sutherland by singing Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with WNO. Watson is certainly a talent to watch.

Italy has traditionally supplied some of the greatest names in opera, so it is surprising that since the emergence of Mirella Freni and Renata Scotto in the mid-1950s no Italian soprano has really captured the imagination of the international opera public. This is partly due to the Byzantine organisation of opera in Italy and the astronomic fees paid by even its most provincial opera-houses.

Those who take the trouble to tour Italy's less illustrious centres bring back tales of a wealth of talents almost unknown outside their native land: names such as Denia Mazzola, Tiziana Fabbricini (incredibly, La Scala's first *Trovatore* since Maria Callas in the 1950s), Giusy Devinu and Antonella Banaudi. But the most striking young Italian soprano I have heard in recent years is Anna Caterina Antonacci, a singer in her early 30s who combines a voice of highly distinctive, typically Italian, colour with physical and histrionic gifts to match those of her younger, but more famous, compatriot Cecilia Bartoli. At her only British appearances to date, concert performances in the title role of Rossini's *Ermione* in London last year, Antonacci held audiences spellbound with her

theatrical personality and a voice equal to every demand of Rossini's elaborate vocal style. She specialises in what the opera world calls the *bel canto*—literally, beautiful singing—repertoire: Rossini's *Semiramide*, *Anaide* in *Moses*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Ninetta in *The Thieving Magpie*, and the queen in *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*. In late March she sings Elizabeth's great rival in Jonathan Miller's production of Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* at Monte Carlo.

It is a curious fact of contemporary operatic life that most of the world's dramatic "Italian" sopranos hail from the former Soviet Union or the United States of America. These huge countries still seem to produce ample-voiced sopranos and mezzos in abundance, although vocal weight is not always matched by comparable finesse and artistry. The opening of the Eastern bloc borders has produced an exodus of big-voiced Russian singers determined to conquer the world. Two of the most outstanding newcomers are the soprano Irina Gorchakova and the mezzo Olga Borodina, both still in their 20s and until recently resident singers at the Kirov Opera of Leningrad/St Petersburg.

I first heard Borodina—in the small, but dramatically important role of Hélène Bezukhova in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*—at the Kirov in June, 1991, by which time she had already been con-

tracted to sing Dalila in a Royal Opera revival of Saint-Saëns's opera, to the Samson of Placido Domingo. This was clearly a major voice, a dark, rich mezzo, even from top to bottom, full of lustrous colours, blessed additionally with that indefinable star quality.

At Covent Garden, though her acting seemed a little subdued and old-fashioned—opera in the Soviet Union lagged behind the production values of the West—Borodina won all hearts with her sultry, sensual tones and her idiomatic singing of French. A recital of Tchaikovsky songs at last year's Edinburgh Festival only confirmed the artistry of this marvellous singer, who could easily become the great dramatic mezzo of our time, the Amneris (*Aida*), the Eboli (*Don Carlos*) or the Carmen of our dreams. Until March 25 she is back at the Royal Opera House singing Marguerite in a new production of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*. She makes her London recital début at the Wigmore Hall in May and is due back at Covent Garden in September next year for the title role of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*.

Her compatriot Gorchakova is, possibly, an even more exciting prospect. For here is a dramatic soprano whose potential seems limitless. She arrived in London, with no advance warning, to sing the haunted, hysterical Renata in a performance of Prokofiev's notoriously

demanding opera *The Fiery Angel* at the 1991 Proms. This was, in effect, an "audition" for Covent Garden's production last year, in which Gorchakova left the London critics unanimously grasping for superlatives: a "phenomenal Renata" (*Financial Times*), of "thrilling virtuosity and commitment" (*The Daily Telegraph*). At the Edinburgh Festival the following year she was a late replacement in a concert performance of Tchaikovsky's *The Enchantress* and, again, she disarmed the critics.

Gorchakova's star is in the ascendent, but she is wisely limiting her appearances: to hear her this year you will have to travel either to St Petersburg (*The Fiery Angel*) in June, to Houston (*Madama Butterfly*) in October and November, or to Japan, later in November, where she will be touring with the Kirov Opera in *The Fiery Angel* and Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*. Luckily for London audiences Covent Garden's new production of *Eugene Onegin*, Tchaikovsky's masterpiece, will bring Gorchakova back to the Royal Opera House for some performances as Tatyana there in July.

Another bright young Covent Garden discovery is the American mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore, who has recently been singing Rosina there. Larmore's career began modestly in France, where she specialised in Rossini's mezzo heroines, but she came to international prominence in 1990, appearing in an outstanding production and recording of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* as the Empress Ottavia. That recording was my first experience of this lovely voice, a rich, if not especially large, low mezzo, without a hint of contralto hootiness, and of an artist of the utmost musical refinement and interpretative insight. When she appeared as Rosina at Covent Garden for some hastily scheduled performances of *The Barber of Seville*, my first impressions of her voice were confirmed and she proved a vivacious stage performer, too.

In the Royal Opera's outrageous production of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, in November, 1991, the soprano role of the page, Urbain, sounded too high for her, but then a new recording of Handel's *Julius Caesar* demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt where Larmore's talents lay: in the florid, lyric mezzo repertoire. Although she lacks Bartoli's native, instinctive style in Italian music, she has a larger, more penetrating voice. This summer they will sing together, Larmore as Dorabella, Bartoli as Despina, in the Salzburg Festival's new production of *Così fan tutte*. She will also sing the title role in *La Cenerentola* at this year's Maggio Musicale in Florence.

The young French contralto Nathalie

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HONG**
**AS MIMI: SWEET
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Stutzmann is another outstanding low-voiced singer. Like Bartoli, Stutzmann is still in her 20s, but hers is an even rarer voice, a genuine dark alto which has been compared to that of one of her idols, the British contralto Kathleen Ferrier. To date, Stutzmann's career has, like Ferrier's, concentrated on the concert repertoire: she has already recorded some of the great choral works of Handel, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, and she is an accomplished recitalist in French and German song. However, her operatic career is proceeding steadily, given the paucity of leading parts for the deepest of female voice categories. She is destined to sing Erda in Wagner's *Ring*, but for the present Stutzmann is concentrating on earlier music, particularly Handel's low castrato roles. In March, however, she sings Fyodor in *Boris Godunov* at the Grand Théâtre, Bordeaux, and in May she will come to London to make

her recital début at the Wigmore Hall.

A brilliant young soprano who has yet to appear in Britain is the Korean Hei-Kyung Hong. Based at the Metropolitan in New York, where she won the National Auditions in 1982, she made her début there three years later as Servilia in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito*.

I heard her for the first time in a major role last December in the Netherlands Opera production of *La Bohème* and it was clear that her sweet, lyrical, yet expansive Mimì was a remarkable development from the light soubrette I had heard in a broadcast of the Met's *Così fan tutte* in the mid-1980s. Hong wisely mixes small roles, such as the first Rhine-maiden in Wagner's *Ring*, with principal parts like Mozart's Pamina, both of which she sings at the Met this spring. In June and July she will come to Europe for Micaëla in a new production of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Bastille in Paris.

**WHERE AND WHEN
TO HEAR THEM SING**

Irina Gorchakova sings *Madama Butterfly* in Houston, Texas, in October and November. **Olga Borodina** is Marguerite in *The Damnation of Faust* at Covent Garden on March 8, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 25.

Janice Watson is Tatyana in Welsh National Opera's *Eugene Onegin* from May to July; she sings Strauss's *Daphne* in concert in San Francisco on June 30 and July 2.

Jennifer Larmore is Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* at Salzburg from July 29.

Jane Eaglen sings *Norma* with Scottish Opera in April, May and June.

Hei-Kyung Hong is Micaëla in *Carmen* at the Opéra-Bastille, Paris, in June and July.

Anna Caterina Antonacci sings *Maria Stuarda* in Monte Carlo on March 26, 28, 31.

Nathalie Stutzmann is Fyodor in *Boris Godunov* at Bordeaux on March 12, 17, 19, 21.

Anna Caterina Antonacci: a voice of highly distinctive, typically Italian colour.



There may be no Callas or Sutherland among this personal collection of bright young stars of the 1990s but that is not the point. Opera is becoming increasingly popular and the opera world has responded to the dearth of great individualistic prima donnas by exploring an ever-widening range of works.

Mozart, we can be sure, will be well-served by most of the young sopranos and mezzos I have mentioned. Rossini, a truly neglected composer apart from a handful of popular comedies, is undergoing a renaissance through the work of singers such as Bartoli, Antonacci and Larmore. Dramatic singers of Gorchakova's and Borodina's quality offer hope that the big, romantic Italian, French and Russian operas will be luxuriously cast in the coming years. This is an exciting prospect. I cannot wait for an *Aida* with Gorchakova and Borodina as the rival princesses □



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GREAT BOTANICAL GARDENS

To the general public, botanical gardens provide welcome refuges from overcrowded cities but their primary purpose has always been scientific, helping botanists unlock the secrets of plant life for the benefit of mankind.

Brinsley Burbidge takes a look at some of the most important of these gardens around the world.

Sometimes I have been surprised to hear the question "Where are the flowers?" asked by visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in Surrey—an establishment that grows more than one in 10 of all the species of flowering plants in the world. In the few hundred acres it occupies, Kew has 35,000 different species of plant, more than any country has within its national boundaries. While most visitors are aware that the prefixes "botanic" or "botanical" indicate a special kind of garden, there remain a few who expect little more than spectacular displays of plants grown for visual effect.

Many botanic gardens, including Kew, do have extensive and colourful plantings and who can say that Kew's million-and-a-half crocuses are not sensational—but they have a more urgent and serious purpose. They are places in which plants are grown for science as well as pleasure and the research done in such establishments is at the heart of man's attempt to provide solutions to some of the world's major problems.

Plants provide the foundation for all forms of life and every increase in our knowledge of them can make a significant difference to the future of our world. Botanic gardens such as Kew regard good communication as the basis for achieving their goals: giving advice to world leaders on environmental policies;

providing information to pharmaceutical companies to help develop new cures for diseases; and passing on their knowledge through books, papers and articles (on average, Kew's staff publish or contribute to the publication of a scientific paper every single day). Visitors to the gardens find that they are provided with an instructive as well as an enjoyable day out because the pleasure they get from the plants is complemented by information about the importance of those plants for mankind. Botanic gardens are the shop window for the plant kingdom and probably the best places to excite and instruct people about the Earth's natural riches and the benefits that we shall all gain by conserving them.

Most of them have staff who are aware that a well-designed garden and attractive plantings can help to win converts to their mission to make conservationists of us all. They serve science, but art is their second master and their ally. Kew is probably the botanic garden with the most diverse range of activities and attractions, but, to give a more rounded picture of these wonderful places, let us

The features most often admired by visitors to Kew are colourful plantings of crocuses and other flowers, and buildings such as Decimus Burton's "campanile" of 1847 (in fact a chimney and water tower), but Kew's greatest value stems from its scientific research.



SIR BRINSLEY BURBIDGE



P. H. STICKLER

look briefly at some of the other gardens for science and pleasure—starting with one of the oldest in Britain.

Founded in 1670, the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, possesses the world's finest collection of rhododendrons and one of the largest and most beautifully laid-out rock-gardens, set within a dramatic and diverse landscape of around 60 acres. It is hard to think of any place so close to a capital city centre in which a visitor can advance his knowledge of important world issues so agreeably. There is joy, too, to be found in the spectacular architecture of two fine 19th-century glasshouses and one from the 20th century. To the south of the garden stretches a superb view of Edinburgh's skyline from the castle to the extinct volcano of Arthur's Seat.

Staying in Scotland, you can easily spend a day at each of the three specialist gardens, all maintained by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh: the Younger Botanic Garden, Benmore, has an outstanding collection of conifers and rhododendrons in a magnificent setting at the head of Holy Loch; Logan Botanic Garden, near Stranraer, Wigtownshire, has, within a 14-acre walled garden, the finest collection of southern-hemisphere plants in Britain; and Dawyck Arboretum, near Peebles, has New-World and other conifers set on a hillside, enhancing the majesty of the trees. My other four-

The Younger Botanic Garden, in Scotland, above, is famed for rhododendrons and conifers. Left, the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, also runs a 400-acre woodland garden at Wakehurst Place, in Sussex, which enjoys a milder climate and more fertile soil than does Kew.

star botanic garden in Scotland is at Dundee. Created with limited resources on an unpromising piece of land north of the river Tay, this delightful garden is laid out along ecological lines and it concentrates on interpretation for visitors.

To find the earliest botanic gardens we need to go to Italy—to Padua and Pisa. When visiting either of these it is best not to mention the others, as each claims to be the oldest in the world. Padua has the weight of evidence on its side, as a vote in the Senate of the Venetian Republic on May 29, 1345, recommended (by 137 ayes to three noes) the foundation of a botanic garden in the city. On July 7 the monastery of San Giustina handed over 2 hectares of land to the republic and Padua University for creating the garden. Pisa's claim to being the oldest is more tenuous and is based on a letter dated July 4, 1545, six days after the Venetian decree, written by Lucca Ghini, founder of Pisa's garden, to Piero Francesco Ricci, major-domo of Cosimo I de' Medici. It implied that the Pisa garden already existed.

Padua retains the formal, symmetrical



layout of an Italian 16th-century garden and the elegance of its design served science in a way that was not equalled until Kew was laid out two centuries later. Padua illustrates another facet of botanic gardens: that of being a centre for the introduction of new plants into cultivation. The potato was probably grown in Padua in 1590 before it became an important plant in British and Irish agriculture. *Jasminum multiflorum*, from China, was in cultivation at Padua as early as 1590 and was probably sent to Britain soon afterwards but lost. It was reintroduced to Britain by Robert Fortune in 1844. The first ever *Cedrus deodara* to be grown in Europe was planted in the Padua garden in 1828.

Continuing on our world tour we now head almost due south for 6,000 miles to Cape Town and the botanical garden at Kirstenbosch. This is the flagship of the eight regional establishments in the care of the National Botanical Institute of South Africa (created by amalgamating the national botanic gardens with the Botanical Research Institute in 1989). Each regional garden grows the local flora. Kirstenbosch, in the lee of Table Mountain, is one of the most beautiful gardens in the world and, wisely, concentrates on growing the unique species of the indigenous flora of South Africa, many of which are rare and endangered in the wild. The garden

A Kew botanist collects plant samples in Brazil, from where rubber-tree seeds were brought to the Gardens in 1876 and introduced to Malaya.

administers three nature reserves which allow some of these plants to survive in their native habitats. Kirstenbosch takes its educational and conservation roles extremely seriously and has a fully-equipped school in which children can learn about the botanical wealth of their country before viewing the plants in the gardens and reserves.

The British, with their obsession for exploiting the resources of their empire, were responsible for the foundation of many tropical botanic gardens. They started one on the island of St Vincent in 1761 as a staging-post in the movement of economically important plants throughout the empire and it was for this garden, with a cargo of bread-fruit as cheap food for slaves, that Captain Bligh was heading when his crew mutinied in 1787. St Vincent Botanic Garden was followed by many others, including Calcutta in 1786, Bogor, in Java, Indonesia, in 1817, Trinidad in 1819 and Peradeniya, in Sri Lanka, in 1821.

Almost the last in the line was Singapore Botanic Garden, founded on the recommendation of Sir Stamford Raffles in 1822. The original garden was closed in 1829, and the present Singapore Botanic Garden, opened in 1859, played



Beyond a lake fringed with travellers' palms, above, lies the octagonal "orchidaria" of Rio's botanical garden, founded in 1808. Right, grey-green Spanish moss is one of the more surprising members of the pineapple family, seen here in Kyoto's new glasshouse.

a vital role in establishing the Malayan rubber industry. Rubber-tree seeds sent by Sir Henry Wickham from Brazil were propagated at Kew, and some seedlings sent to Singapore. The superintendent of the Singapore garden, Henry Ridley, was convinced that rubber could be grown as a crop in Malaya and that it would be more profitable than coffee. Despite opposition and cynicism, his perseverance paid off in time to provide Malaya with a new source of income at the beginning of this century, when disease was taking its toll of the coffee crop. The garden soon became the world centre for advice on growing rubber.

A short and remarkable interlude in the garden's history came in the 1940s when Singapore was invaded by Japan. The occupation authorities were so impressed with the work done in the garden that the director, Richard Holtum, and his staff were allowed to pursue their research almost without interruption. The garden is today a Mecca for tourists, with more than a million visitors a year to its collection of orchids.

Kyoto, in Japan, is probably the most famous place in the world for gardens as art and for contemplation. Kyoto Botanic Garden, which has its own decorative gardens, has just opened an architecturally imaginative glasshouse. This contains excellent interpretive displays that concentrate on the ecological

problems facing the world and on the role that plants can play in providing solutions to those problems.

On the other side of the Pacific are the numerous and diverse botanic gardens of North America. If Kew has a rival for the importance of its scientific research and influence throughout the world, it must be the Missouri Botanical Garden, in St Louis, which is just as exciting for the casual visitor. Its centre-piece is the remarkable Climatron, a geodesic dome 175 feet in diameter with no internal support, which was built in 1960. New York has both the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, famed for its far-reaching educational programme, and the New York Botanical Garden, where, again, there is an extensive educational commitment and research programmes of the highest international importance. California, too, has several excellent botanic gardens, but it is to the Fairchild Tropical Garden, in Florida, that I turn for one of the finest collections of a single plant group anywhere. The Fairchild has an encyclopaedic collection of palms, sadly damaged by hurricane Andrew in 1992, set in

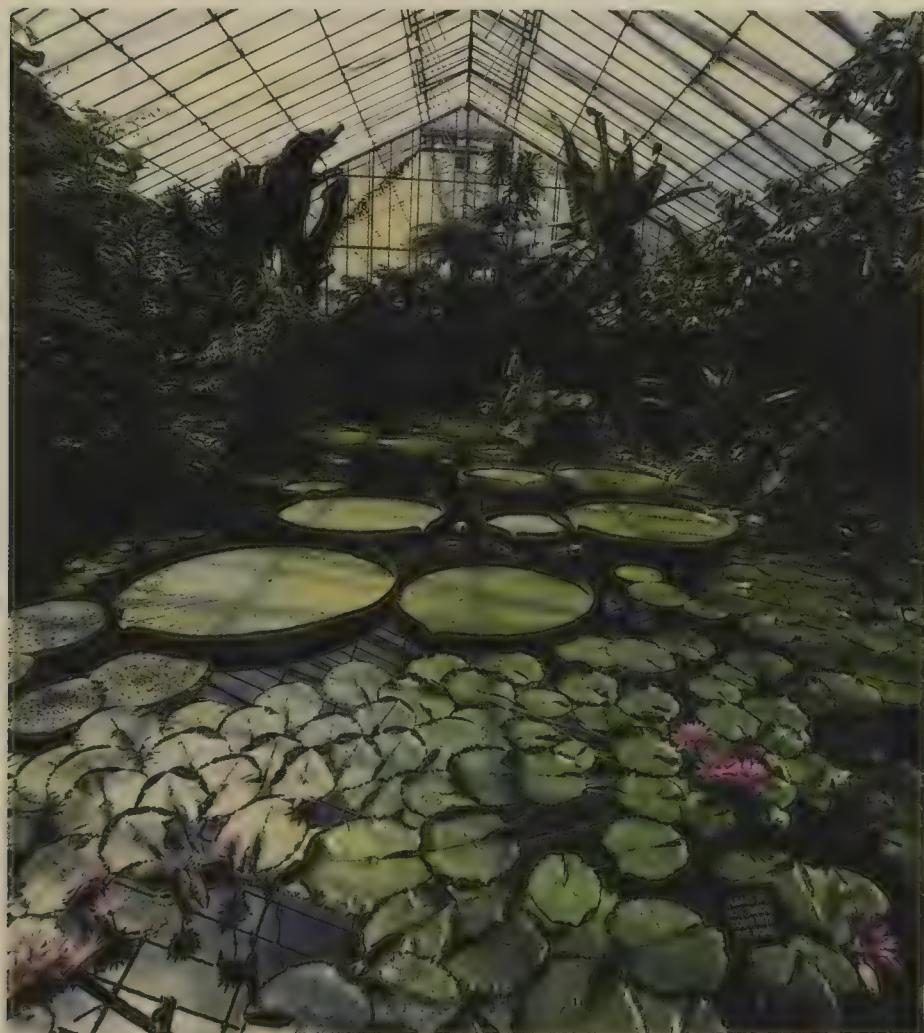


gardens skilfully laid out on a grand scale and with landscaping that brilliantly masks the flatness of the site. The scientific collection of palms is grown on what appears to be a series of terraces leading down to a series of linked lakes. It is also the only garden that I know of in which the visitor is warned to beware of alligators!

We come finally to South America and to the botanic garden in Rio de Janeiro, which, like most others, has its



DAVID ARDNJR



GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

The pincushion protea *Leucospermum reflexum*, native to the Cape Town area, grows in the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden, above, with Table Mountain as the backdrop. Left, the lily pond forms part of the tropical section of the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

origins in economic botany and the introduction of new plants for cultivation. For a visitor from northern Europe the greatest attraction is the extraordinary diversity of tropical vegetation set in a largely formal landscape, which includes an avenue of the tallest royal palms in the world.

And so back to Kew, which combines all the characteristics of those other gardens. Like them Kew is devoted to adding to our knowledge of the plant kingdom at a time when the wise use of that knowledge will make all the difference between a sustainable future for our planet and a far bleaker scenario. All botanic gardens make their knowledge available to everyone—research scientist, politician, teacher and the non-specialist visitor alike—by publications and educational activities. Moreover, their collections are displayed in ways that give pleasure to millions of visitors. The flowers are there; the world's botanic gardens, by growing them, studying them and telling everyone about their importance, are supporting a sustainable future for plants and our planet. □

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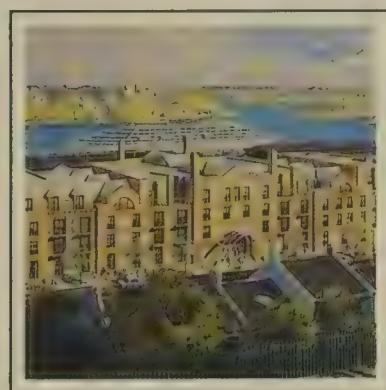
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ART ON PARADE

Maria Donovan talks to a shrewd art-dealer whose novel selling techniques have taken Paris by storm.

"Today, with the world in crisis, it isn't enough to line the walls of a gallery with paintings, set up a few sculptures, stick on numbers and prepare a price-list. You cannot sit back and wait for the buyers and collectors—you must go out of your way to catch them." This is Didier Imbert, one of the five most important and successful art-dealers in the world, speaking in Paris. In his mid-40s, wearing jeans, loafers and open-neck denim shirt, he sits above his gallery, Didier Imbert Fine Art, in Avenue Matignon.

While he talks, his eyes are glued to the closed-circuit television by his side, and he rubs his hands together with satisfaction. "Look at the crowd downstairs: *pas mal*, and they aren't just the usual Saturday afternoon yobbos from the suburbs. They're buyers!" Didier Imbert was at



Didier Imbert (left) says of the artist Fernando Botero: "I made him a star."

that time exhibiting the works of Fernando Botero: drawings, oils, and scaled-down sculptures that would fit into the living-room of a rich art-lover.

I had first met Botero 12 years earlier after having seen one of his paintings—a portly bishop in full ecclesiastical regalia—exhibited on New York's Madison Avenue. At that time he was still relatively unknown in Paris, but in the USA he belonged to an up-and-coming group of Latin American figurative painters and already had a picture, *Mona Lisa at twelve*, in the Museum of Modern Art.

Last Christmas and early into the new year of 1993 the same Fernando Botero was literally stopping the traffic in Paris: his monumental Aztec-Olmec-primitive statues had been placed in an outdoor exhibition, lining the Champs-Elysées

from Place de la Concorde to the Rond-Point. This free show was quite unlike anything seen before in Paris. And it was all created and stage-managed by Didier Imbert, Botero's French dealer and impresario, who was ready and waiting when it inspired customers in their hundreds to visit nearby Avenue Matignon. "I made Botero a star," says Imbert. "This is how I work. I don't just take on an artist, I prepare for him a show, an event—a happening!"

Downstairs in the gallery a group of Japanese tourists were milling around the boutique counter, buying up Botero badges, posters, postcards, T-shirts. The works in the accompanying exhibition

were practically sold out, give or take a few drawings. The biggest watercolour, *Mother and Son*, dated 1990, sold for more than FFr1 million—nearly £125,000.

The Botero "happening" was not the first event of its kind to be staged by Imbert: that honour goes to the works of Henry Moore, with which Imbert took Paris by storm last year. Again, an open-air spectacle—more than 30 statues scattered over the lawns of the Bois de Boulogne's Bagatelle gardens—ran in tandem with a gallery show, which reproduced the artist's surroundings at his cottage in Much Hadham, Hertfordshire. To complement the drawings on show on the walls was a display of Moore's favourite armchair, his books, and objects he collected and which inspired him, ranging from driftwood to African fetishes, from the carapace of a turtle to Hittite statuettes.

The open-air exhibition at Bagatelle was ceremonially opened by the Queen, who was in Paris on a state visit. "The Queen's role in the show was a stroke of luck," admits Imbert. "I had started work on this double exhibition in 1990, when I had no idea that the Queen was coming to Paris."

To my question, "Why Moore?" he says that, apart from his admiration for the greatest sculptor of this century, he wanted to increase awareness of him among the French. "Picasso, always Picasso . . . Moore was a novelty. I happen to be a friend of his daughter, Mary, who offered to lend me the props. We could not bring over the whole cottage and fit it into my gallery, but we could import the 'atmosphere'."

"How did you manage to get Bagatelle?" I asked. He smiles with self-deprecating modesty. "Connections. The lady in charge of cultural affairs in the mayor's office in Paris is a friend of mine. One day, over lunch, I raised the idea of using the park for an exhibition. In France people like to do business over a white table-cloth."

Imbert was certainly born with good connections: aristocratic on his mother's side and naval on his father's. He could have whiled away his days on beaches and in night-clubs. He still has the rangy, blond good looks that have endeared him to the international party set and, most importantly, to the late Princess Grace of Monaco, who gave him his first big break organising exhibitions in the principality. But above all he loves art or, more accurately, the art of the deal.

He made his first forays into the business when he was 19: "selling lithographs and prints door-to-door". Following a break for military service, he considered taking a job in *Playboy's* advertising department, but decided

J

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Among Imbert's "happenings" was an unprecedented Paris show of Botero's sculptures, above, along a stretch of the Champs-Elysées. Such imaginative marketing ensured Botero's oils, like *Maja con Abanico*, above right, sold briskly.

instead to return to art. He says: "When I was young I adored the Impressionists; today they bore me." He soon began to develop a penchant for the Pont-Aven school, no doubt fuelled by his inherited love of the sea and his large house on the Brittany coast, where his boat is moored. Although he now concentrates on young modern artists and the "big names", he still specialises in Pont-Aven works; his gallery is currently preparing the *catalogue raisonné* for Gustave Loiseau.

In 1985 Imbert opened his Paris home, a splendid Napoleon III town house whose garden borders the Parc Monceau, as a private gallery. He continued to work from there until 1988, organising high-profile, major exhibitions and receiving clients by special appointment. Then in 1987 he bought *La Celestina*, one of Picasso's most famous "blue period" portraits. Having secured it for FFr25 million, he restored it and put it on show in his elegant, wood-panelled reception-room, confident that he would sell it to an overseas client for double. He did not, however, anticipate

the opposition of the Ministry of Culture, which refused to issue an export licence.

Imbert was in trouble, but not for long. Another Picasso painting, *The Wedding of Pierrette*, came onto the French market. Imbert struck a deal with the owner whereby he offered *La Celestina* as a gift to the French state—in exchange for permission to let *Pierrette* leave the country. Imbert then took a share in the enormous profit obtained when *Pierrette* sold in Japan at the highest price reached by a Picasso. This much-publicised transaction was carried as headline news on every French newspaper. With such gains Didier Imbert was at last able to acquire a real gallery. He chose to site it on prestigious Avenue Matignon, conveniently located close to the Jockey Club of France, where the well-heeled racing fraternity convenes.

Since then Didier Imbert Fine Art has put on a series of top-drawer exhibitions. Names like Warhol, Picabia, Brancusi and Victor Brauner have graced his walls. It was also the place to which actor Alain Delon headed when he wanted to show his private collection of Rembrandts, Utrillo, Tiepolos, Modiglianis, Rodins and Bugatti bronzes. "I chose this gallery," says Delon, "because it is one of the most beautiful in Paris and

because Didier's a friend of mine. Why should I go elsewhere?"

Imbert certainly has no shortage of friends, and he likes to provide them with opportunities to get to know one another and to do business. He organises his "happenings", gives everyone a good time—and meanwhile sells his art. He likes to think that everyone benefits: his friends, the public, the artist and, of course, himself. "All famous artists have had a good dealer behind them. Any artist who thinks he can dispense with the services of one is heading for oblivion. Those who have tried to do without us have paid a high price," he avers.

Didier Imbert continues to keep a watchful eye on his closed-circuit television screens. Business down-towners is brisk; and Botero badges are selling like hot cakes. In fact all of Paris is suffering from badge-mania. A few steps from the gallery, where Avenue Matignon meets the Champs-Elysées gardens, sellers are doing a roaring trade under the trees.

Imbert bought all the paintings on exhibition in his gallery outright. "Botero's smart," he tells me. "When I suggested a show, he set out his conditions: he would not give me a commission, but insisted that he wanted cash down first and that afterwards I could do what I

liked. So I hit on the idea of commercialising his art and minting badges that bring in a steady revenue."

Strategically placed booths were selling Botero paraphernalia all along the section of the Champs-Elysées where his statues were displayed. People who cannot afford the original, buy badges—kids and grown-ups—you should go to the avenue and watch the crowds." The idea of commercialising an artist is not new. Museums do it the world over. At Giverny, where Monet lived in a state of perpetual worry over money, there is today a flourishing cottage-industry of products decorated with waterlilies, everything from tea-towels to T-shirts.

"It's what brings in the money," admits Didier Imbert. "Not that you can do away with the conventional openings,

To accompany a gallery show of Henry Moore works like *Rocking Chair*, right, Moore's daughter (left objects) to recreate a homely atmosphere. For a larger Moore show Imbert negotiated the use of the *Jardin de Bagatelle*, in Paris.



the beautiful people, champagne and canapés that go with each exhibition. Opening-day crowds don't buy but they talk... ." Each Didier Imbert opening is a traffic-stopper on Avenue Matignon. He puts a white marquise on the pavement outside the gallery—again, thanks to his connections in the mayor's office. Champagne literally flows down the street.

After Paris, many of Imbert's shows travel. The Henry Moore exhibition has now gone to Japan, where it is touring four cities until the end of the summer. And several of Botero's colossal statues from the Champs-Elysées are now en route to Avignon (after a stop-over in Italy to restore their patina and to replace parts, like a man's walking-stick, that have been stolen). What more magnificent alfresco environment for such a spectacle than the Palais des Papes? And what better occasion for an exhibition than the Avignon festival held each summer between June and August?

"And then—what next?" I ask.

"Well, Russia, of course. At the end of September I am putting on Botero at the Pushkin Museum, in Moscow, and at the Hermitage, in St Petersburg."

"So there can't be such a crisis in the art world?"

"There is a crisis, alas, and has been since spring 1990. I don't think it is entirely due to the Gulf War; things had already become difficult before then."

"Now you see," he says, "why it is so important to create these art spectacles. You have to attract the buyers, offer something new—a new angle at least. There's money around, don't kid yourself. There always will be."

He would not tell me the subject of the next "happening" on Avenue Matignon, which is a closely-guarded secret, but he assures me he is working on it already □

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HEBRIDEAN JOURNEY

Derek Cooper falls under
the spell of Scotland's western isles.
Photographs by Patrick Ward.



There is something about the approach to the Hebrides that raises the temperature of anticipation; the pulse beats more strongly as you near the coast. Turning a bend you may discover distant views of islands shimmering on the horizon; the boat is waiting at the pier to transport you to a different world. They have been given all sorts of romantic labels—the dream isles of the west, the land of lost content, the enchanted isles and, in Gaelic, *Tir nan Og*, the country of the young.

Small wonder that island-lovers see the west Highland ports as frontier-posts beyond which lie blue seas and magic shores. Here, where the roads and railway lines end at the edge of the sea, gulls keen above fishing trawlers, there is a tang of seaweed and brine and the air is bracing. There is the 18th-century herring port of Ullapool at the head of Loch Broom, where you board the car ferry for Stornoway; Kyle of Lochalsh, for the short trip over the sea to Skye; Mallaig, for the small isles of Rum, Muck, Eigg and Canna; busy Oban—Charing Cross of the Highlands—where the boats leave for Iona, Mull, Barra of the cockles, Collonsay, Oronsay, Coll and Tiree; Kennacraig, for the distilleries of Islay and Jura. And out there in the Atlantic lie the remotest landfalls of all, where few boats go—lonely St Kilda, the haunted

Flannan Isles, deserted Rona, Mingulay and Sula Sgeir of the gannets.

Descendants of islanders exiled now on the other side of the world stir when they hear these distant names and they “in dreams behold the Hebrides”. And there are many islands to behold: some 550 can be described as Hebridean. They lie in two long archipelagos and come in all shapes and sizes, from the big landmass of Lewis and Harris to tiny uninhabited outliers, some no more than windswept seal rocks.

They have been there a long time geologically the Outer Hebrides, the ones which take the brunt of the Atlantic storms, are 3,000 million years old—and they are rich in history, legend and myth. They attract walkers, climbers, bird-watchers, anglers and those who believe they need to unwind. Gloriously unimproved, short on industry and long on views, the islands are havens for simple-lifers, potters and the mildly dotty. Arts-and-crafters abound, spinners and weavers rejoice in the tranquillity of it all. Even Wordsworth, used to the peace of the English Lakes, wrote of the cuckoo “breaking the silence of the seas among the farthest Hebrides”.

The scenery is spectacularly varied, offering some of the softest sandy beaches in northern Europe, plunging cliffs hung with seabirds, trout lochs, inaccessible peaks, soaring eagles and, even in the

The eastern coast of South Harris, above, in the Outer Hebrides is barren and rocky: land so intractable that the island's dead had to be taken to the west coast for burial. To grow their oats and potatoes the crofters made small beds from local seaweed, mixed with peat.

Preceding pages: between Harris and Skye lie the Shiants—the Enchanted Islands. Last inhabited at the turn of the century, they were purchased in the 1930s by Compton Mackenzie who renovated the dwelling on House Island—connected by a shingle spit to Rough Island, in the foreground.

height of summer, plenty of space for all comers. There is also something special about the quality of the light in these northern parts, a clarity that magnifies perception and amazes painters and photographers. The physical beauty can be breath-taking: spell-binding views and ravishing prospects at every turn.

Island-living appeals to the romantic in all of us. The Prince of Wales flies off to Berneray for spiritual peace. Compton Mackenzie found his little bit of happiness on Barra, and it was to a farm on Jura that George Orwell retired to work on *Nineteen Eighty-four*. Sir Walter Scott was awed by the Cuillins of Skye and tried to reduce them to verse. Keats felt that the rugged wonder of Fingal’s Cave on Staffa “far surpasses the finest Cathedral” for solemnity and grandeur, and Mendelssohn wrote an overture to make the



world understand "how extraordinarily the Hebrides affected me". Turner set up his easel and depicted Loch Coruisk, on Skye, as a maelstrom of colour and light.

Most people see the Hebrides only in summer, when the days are so long that the sun barely goes down before it rises again. But beware: the islands can be dark and cruel. With the winter come winds as destructive as any Caribbean hurricane. At times it seems that the islands lie under a perpetual drenching of rain and gale. The sheep on the hills are bedraggled, the moors sodden, the rivers foaming in spate. It is a hostile landscape that encourages introspection and a more than average preoccupation with the eternal truths.

On Eriskay and in South Uist you will meet some of the most devout Catholics in the western world; on Lewis some of the strictest Calvinist sabbatarians. After all, it was the Hebridean island of Iona that St Columba chose as the launch-pad for his missionary work in Scotland. Today the 13th-century abbey founded by the Benedictines is a beacon of ecumenical goodwill—holy, but not holier than thou.

So what happens in the Hebrides when the tourists are not looking? The islanders once led the world in making enduring tweed and no stalker or sportsman was properly dressed without a

Tobermory, above, founded as a fishing port in 1788 by the British Fisheries' Society, takes its name from Tobar Mhoire, Mary's Well. Two centuries earlier a Spanish galleon, blown up by a Scottish prisoner, sank in the bay with treasure said to be worth 30 million ducats. Optimistic divers are still searching for the gold, which has so far eluded them. Today lobster pots and prawn creels line the quay of Mull's most important town and its reputation as one of the safest anchorages on Scotland's west coast has made it a haven for yachtsmen.

The windswept headland of Borreraig, below, in Skye is hallowed ground. In this place the MacCrimmons—for three centuries the hereditary pipers to the ruling Clan MacLeod—had their piping college. Legend says the family received the gift of music from a fairy. They scorned common marches and reels and taught only Ceol Mór, the Great Music, to their pupils, who toiled for seven years to memorise a repertoire of at least 200 compositions. Scots exiles all over the world contributed funds for the 1933 memorial on the shore of Loch Dunvegan.





suiting woven on Harris. They still make some of the most egregious and startling whiskies—classic malts like Skye's Talisker and the phenolic Lagavulin and Laphroaig of Islay.

These are crofting islands, their economy anchored to sheep and the harvest of lobster pots and prawn creels. The plankton-rich Hebridean seas once fed every family in the islands and thousands of barrels of fish were exported through Castlebay, Mallaig and Stornoway, the herring and mackerel capitals of the north. The shores yielded tangle, wrack-weeds and bladder-wrack, which in the 18th century made fortunes when converted into kelp. So prosperous were the islands that by the 1840s the population



Knowledgeable spectators, above, enjoy sheepdog trials on Skye. The livelihoods of the remaining crofters are still linked to sheep. To support new, city-based lifestyles Scottish landowners removed many tenants between 1780 and 1860 to make room for more profitable Cheviots and, in spite of later parliamentary Acts to protect the crofters, the islands' population halved.

Hard-working ferries link islands like Iona, left, with bustling Oban on the mainland. The 16th-century cathedral church of St Mary and the monastic buildings founded three centuries earlier by Benedictine monks stand on this holy island where St Columba landed in AD 563. Iona became the Christian centre of Europe; its monks began the Book of Kells in the eighth century.

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OLD SCOTCH

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KING WILLIAM IV
QUEEN VICTORIA
AND PRINCE ALBERT
THE PRINCE OF WALES



had soared to 93,000; it has been in steady decline ever since.

Travel round the islands today and you will see the tumbled ruins of cottars' and crofters' hovels, some razed by fire, others unroofed to encourage emigration. Apologists talk of the stony, overworked soil, the lean years of famine and the high birth rate which made the infamous Clearances inevitable. The passing of the Crofters Holding Act in 1886 brought a measure of security to those who remained, but the tide never turned; in 100 years the population has been halved. On many an island only the cuckoo's voice can now be heard.

When you survey the empty glens where once there were hard-working communities you may think of the past as a golden age. Psychologists talk of the melancholia of the Hebrides, islands that time has passed by. Yet the music still made there—the Skye group Runrig has reached the top of the charts—reveals this to be sentimental claptrap.

The bright teenagers do head for the cities as soon as they can, and many an island township is conspicuous for its high incidence of elderly folk. But in the past decade younger people have begun to return to the Hebrides. You will hear Gaelic spoken in schools where once it was banned. The recession on the mainland has made island life look more attractive: many feel it is better to be out

of work in the heart of their own community than in a high-rise Glasgow flat.

I do not wish to give the impression that the islands are moth-balled in some pastoral time-warp. Economic zeal and an appetite for the acquisition of consumer durables are as strong here as in any city-centre. Kit-built bungalows brought over on the ferry sit incongruously on the skyline, their pebble-dash walls and lace curtains more suited to a north-London suburb than a sea loch in North Uist. How right Ruskin was when he observed that "a single villa can mar a landscape and dethrone a dynasty of hills". The abandoned salmon cages littering the shore, the clip-on shopfront fascias, the Day-Glo bed-and-breakfast signs, the plastic jetsam washed up with every storm certainly tarnish the image of ancient dignity.

As I write, foundations are being laid for an unlovely box-girder bridge which will span Kyleakin and enable tourists to speed by car over the sea to Skye. The commercial pressures to exploit the islands are intense. Unemployment is high; without jobs people will leave. But the danger is that new industries bringing employment will rape the landscape and pollute the environment. The debate between the entrepreneurs and those who want to preserve the isolation of the Hebrides has been focused dramatically by a grotesque proposal to



Appraising a sample of whisky in the warehouse at Talisker, above, on the shores of Loch Harport in Skye. The distillery dates from the 1830s and its classic island dram is a powerful and pungent one. It has a smoky, almost medicinal flavour and was eulogised by Robert Louis Stevenson as "the King o' drinks".

Humour is alive and well in the Hebrides. In the snug of the Pier Hotel, Portree, top, regulars gather beneath Chris Monk's mural that reflects local passions and prejudices.



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On the island of Staffa, which covers only 71 acres, is Fingal's Cave, a geological cousin of the Giant's Causeway more than 80 miles across the sea in Ireland. The cave, which later inspired Mendelssohn and Keats, was first surveyed by Sir Joseph Banks in 1772. "Compared to this," he wrote, "what are the cathedrals or palaces built by men!" A steady stream of visitors followed the renowned botanist; by 1799 the accepted price of a round trip to Staffa from Oban was 15 shillings and two bottles of whisky. The soaring grandeur of the basalt columns makes Fingal's Cave the most famous curiosity in the Hebrides.

destroy the whole east coast of Harris with a massive super-quarry, from which 10 million tonnes of rock will be blasted annually for the next 70 years, reducing the mountain of Roineabhal to rubble.

Is it selfish to want to protect this wild corner of Europe from desecration? There is so much to be lost. Recently I sailed up the Sound of Raasay with a few friends; we had a picnic with us and an uninhabited isle in mind. The sun beat down, the sea sparkled. On Skye the cliffs and peaks of Trotternish reared up like fangs. We passed the cave where Bonnie Prince Charlie is said to have sheltered after his defeat at Culloden. We saw seals and sea birds, gazed in awe at the fantastic pinnacles of the Quiraing and dropped anchor in the deep, clear waters of Caol Fladda. There was not a sound save the distant cry of an oystercatcher. Total peace. We were alone on the face of the Earth. There must be other places as remarkable as the Hebrides, but I have yet to see them □

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TRAVELS WITH VIRGINIA

The writer Virginia Woolf was an enthusiastic traveller and an acute observer of people and places. Jan Morris has followed in her footsteps around Europe.

Supposing you had chanced, one day in the spring of 1932, to be standing on the platform at Victoria station where the boat train from the Continent, all paint, polish and mahogany, was gently steaming and hissing. You might then have seen a most remarkable face looking meditatively out of a carriage window, half-veiled in steam as in the old movies. It was the pale, elegant, contemplative face of a middle-aged English gentlewoman. It was not quite beautiful, being a trifle long and horsey, but it was instantly compelling. It spoke, you might feel, of yearning, and poetry, and imagination, and loss, and even tragedy—and when, somebody out of sight in the compartment having said something entertaining, it broke into a spontaneous carefree laugh, of unexpected fun too.

This was the writer Virginia Woolf, long years before her death by suicide, returning from one of her trips abroad, and six decades later her presence at the window haunts me still, for I have been following the trail of her journals, letters

and essays around Europe, and wherever she went I, too, seem to have seen, looking out of trains, watchful at restaurant tables, that melancholy but fascinating face—veiled not by steam now, but only by the opacity of time.

Sometimes, indeed, Virginia Woolf's company, as I pursued her travels, was so spectral as to be almost undetectable. I could only dimly discern her, for example, emerging through the front door of 22 Hyde Park Gate, London, where she spent the first 22 years of her life. In her day this cul-de-sac off Kensington Gore was a citadel of London's gentlemanly and accomplished haute bourgeoisie. There were footmen about in the street then, and people bowed to one another on the pavements. Now a

very different culture inhabits it; and it was from the doorway of the Fijian Embassy, among the well-protected houses and apartments of a cosmopolitan plutocracy, through an intermittent screen of passing BMWs and Range Rovers, that I glimpsed just for a moment her tall, slender figure—hardly more than a frail suggestion in that alien setting, stepping out with parasol and wide, flowered hat for her morning walk in the park.

On the other hand, sometimes I felt her presence quite substantially. One day down in the Bordeaux country I accompanied her to the medieval château tower in which the philosopher Michel de Montaigne wrote most of his essays. Virginia revered the old sage, and made a joyous pilgrimage there in 1931. She was bewitched by the place, and was escorted around the estate, she said, by a very jolly dog. I was enchanted too, when I arrived there 60 years later in the heat of a summer noonday to find the castle and its village magically empty, still and silent. I felt Virginia in all but living companionship, ecstatic beside me as I walked up the long castle avenue; and I swear to you that when a big red setter came bounding and grinning down the drive, he was welcoming not me, but the invisible familiar at my side.

Here and there I found more tangible signs of her passing, and then I sensed her looking over my shoulder with mixed feelings, as one looks at old mementoes of one's own. At Mycenae she was chuffed to find her signature from the hotel register hanging framed upon the foyer wall. At Cassis, in Provence, she wiped away a nostalgic tear, I think, as I pottered around the half-derelict cottage where she once dreamed and wrote among the vineyards. In Ireland she wryly explored with me the vestigial ruins of Bowen's Court, the long-demolished mansion where she stayed in appalling discomfort with her friend the novelist Elizabeth Bowen. And how she chortled when, on

*CONSTANTINOPLE, 1906:
“NATURE & ART
& THE AIR OF HEAVEN ARE
ALL EQUALLY MIXED,
IN VAST QUANTITIES, WITH
A GENEROUS HAND.”*



MURRAYANONI





the Greek island of Euboea, Francis Noel-Baker, grandson of her host there in 1906, looked out the family visitors' book to show me her autograph inexplicably sharing a page with some people called La Bande des Anamites—just the kind of juxtaposition Virginia relished!

Often I thought I saw her with her husband Leonard in their car: their Sun Singer perhaps, or their luxurious Lanchester ("powerful as a tiger, smooth as an eel"), or the big American Hupmobile convertible that they rented in Greece. They loved cars, and often went for motoring holidays on the Continent, sometimes taking with them their beloved marmoset, Mitz—and so I often observed them, if only in my mind's eye, the practical Leonard dealing with the customs papers, the enigmatic face of Virginia in the passenger seat, and a little crowd of officials, soldiers, children and passers-by, German, Dutch or French, laughing and playing with the little monkey at the window.

Above all, everywhere I seemed to glimpse Virginia sitting in hotel lounges—in Ireland and in Italy, in the south of France or in Bayreuth before the opera. Just another educated Englishwoman she looks at first sight in such manifestations, enjoying the statutory grumble with her compatriots about the price of foreign food and the obstructiveness of foreign bureaucracy before she goes off to the writing-table to write, one supposes, her chatty letters home.

*MYCENAE, 1906: "WHERE
DOES THE PLACE BEGIN
—WHERE STOP—WHAT DOES
IT NOT GATHER
ON ITS WAY? THERE WAS
NEVER A SIGHT, I
THINK, LESS MANAGEABLE."*

But then, what a change overcomes that polite, conventional face, what a clever amusement enters it, as she pens her journal there, what mischief and lyricism and abuse and humour enliven her eye before, putting her fountain-pen away in response to the gong, she enters the dining-room on her husband's arm, bowing and smiling pleasantly to their fellow-guests already sitting at the tables, who bow and simper in return, remarking what a pleasure it is these days to come across a real English lady...

But it is not just a lady, but a great writer that is passing by their tables, and wherever I wandered with Virginia Woolf, even when I was scoffing oysters in Marennes with her, or haggling in the markets of Istanbul, I was always aware that I was in the presence of genius. She was not an adventurous traveller, but she was a marvellous observer—or rather responder. Not a detail of these journeys,

I am sure, from the colour of the fittings in her railway carriage to the sibilant whispers of those diners in the hotel, failed to leave some small imprint on her sensibility. All was absorbed, all transmuted somewhere into her literature.

I have never greatly liked the sound of the Virginia Woolf milieu, the ethos of the Bloomsbury set. It all sounds too snobbish, too affected and cliquy for my tastes. On the road, though, I discovered another Virginia Woolf, far more natural, and far happier. She travelled with uninhibited pleasure—her recurring insanity seldom afflicted her during these journeys—and I found that her company was seldom sad, despite that *tristesse* in her expression, but, on the contrary, generally high-spirited and sometimes downright hilarious.

Even the very last of all her journeys, along the Sussex track to the bank of the Ouse where, in March, 1941, she drowned herself, I found to be unexpectedly comforting. For I stumbled with her there, too, all the way down the rough lane across the marshes, to the place where she threw herself at last into the water. It was not such a tragic death after all, I thought, as I imagined her body floating away in its draperies: it was only the immersion of one grand spirit in another, the spirit of art united with the spirit of place. Virginia Woolf's life was full of sorrows, but she was being released at the end, I told myself, into the happier side of herself, into the gift for enjoyment which she had shared with me so merrily on our travels through the smudged timetables of the past □

*Quotations accompanying illustrations are by Virginia Woolf and appear in Jan Morris's forthcoming book *Virginia Woolf's Places*.*

GO
FOR
GOLD

Ballantine's
**GOLD
SEAL**





THE BIG CHEESE

Philippe Olivier tells Michael Raffael about his lifelong passion for France's regional delicacies. Photographs by Roger Stowell.

To become a *maître fromager*, a master cheese expert, takes at least 10 years' hard graft. It takes a lifetime of passionate dedication to become a Philippe Olivier. Camembert runs in his blood. His grandfather owned a grocery shop in Rouen. His father and his uncle both sold cheese. The shop he opened 19 years ago in Boulogne's rue Thiers is a living monument to France's finest cheeses.

After attending the Ecole de Fromagerie in Paris, young Philippe travelled the country as a kind of cheesemaker's *au pair*. He stayed on farms and worked in dairies, learning the secrets of the trade on the way. "My hosts," he recalls, "would say: 'Philippe, you know more or less all there is to know here; it's time to move on. A friend of ours, 15 kilometres down the valley, makes *chèvre*. We'll give you an introduction.'"

This apprenticeship taught him, firsthand, the difference between the mass-produced factory product and the traditional cheeses of France. The key, he argues, lies in the freshness and quality of the milk. Once chilled, it deteriorates. It may be as much as two days old before it is collected by tanker and delivered to the creamery, where it is heated up again. The shorter the time between milking and the start of cheesemaking, the better the end result. "A Pont-l'Évêque," he enthuses, "made from milk which is still warm from the cow's udder is a marvel."

The cheese merchant needs to develop two distinct, but complementary, skills. First, he must acquire a collector's instinct. Like a wine merchant, he has to build a network of sources that reflect his taste. Next, he needs the technical knowledge to handle his wares so that they

reach his customers in perfect condition. This maturing process, the *affinage*, can make or break a cheese. Each of them—and there are about 300 distinct varieties in France—benefits from special handling. One may be better for having lain on straw. Another should be kept on cloth. In the cellars beneath his shop M. Olivier has five separate storage rooms, each with its own individual humidity and ventilation.

These reflect the five main cheese families. Soft cheeses with mould on the surface, *les pâtes molles à croûtes fleuries*, include Brie and Camembert. Washed soft cheeses, like the assertive Munster, Livarot or Pont-l'Évêque, have a slightly sticky rind. M. Olivier has launched his own version, called Vieux-Boulogne. Over a seven-week ripening period he macerates in calvados and cider square bricks of cheese supplied by a local farmer.

The third group, pressed cheeses, range from the strong and pungent Reblochon to the larger Tomme and St-Paulin. In this broader group is an enclave of about 20 Trappiste cheeses, produced in monasteries. Many of these were threatened with extinction until M. Olivier stepped in and persuaded the monks to form a loose-knit association which prevented industrial manufacturers from stealing their names and know-how.

Roquefort, Gorgonzola, Stilton and Fourme d'Ambert—the blue cheeses make up another category. Last, but not least, come the goat's milk cheeses.

This "family" structure should be born in mind when planning a cheeseboard to avoid serving similar cheeses rather than a variety. And it is far better to offer a single perfect piece of, say, Brie



Appreciating the differences of taste and texture is important. The delicate Fontainebleau contrasts well with a more robust Corsican ewe's milk cheese.

de Meaux than half a dozen plastic-wrapped, uninteresting lumps of facsimiles.

Philippe Olivier is dismissive of the trend towards offering fancy breads to accompany a cheese course. A simple baguette or a *pain de campagne* is preferable to assorted loaves flavoured with onion, olives or sun-dried tomatoes. Exceptionally, he concedes, a walnut loaf may suit a fresh goat's milk cheese, but there he draws the line.

His advice on accompanying wines is as pragmatic. Since, in France, the trend is towards drinking less, he suggests that it is simpler to offer the main course wine and choose cheeses that suit it, rather than vice versa. Someone who has been drinking Sancerre with salmon needs look no further than a *chèvre* such as a Crottin de Chavignol, also from the Loire valley. "Drink the drink of the region where the cheese is produced," he advises, "and you can't go wrong."

The old adage that the most expensive red wine should be saved for the cheese dates from the turn of this century when cheese was a luxury commodity. At a time when Frenchmen each consumed about 3 kilograms a year, it cost a Flanders mine-worker a week's wages to buy 700 grams of local Maroilles. Now, at considerable risk to their health, the French chew their way through about 28 kilograms of cheese a year per head.

Choosing the perfectly ripe cheese is not easy for the amateur: "A good cheese," M Olivier insists, "is not always a good-looking cheese. For instance, a chalk-white Camembert of perfect size and shape is bound to be mass-produced. A true one has a

slightly wavy surface, maybe with a few brown specks. If you find one like that, your chances of having the real thing are better. The same is true of Brie. With a Roquefort the blue veining should go right back to the heel of the cheese. It should not be localised in the centre. Pressed cheeses improve with age. We look for slight hair fractures in the *pâte*, which are signs of richness. All good cheese has an aroma. Anyone who wants it odourless is missing the point."

Philippe Olivier deplores the modern habit of filling a trolley up with the week's shopping in the neighbourhood supermarket. Far better as far as cheese is concerned, he recommends, is to buy a little at a time and eat it straight away. Being a live product it does not store well in most homes. A master cheese merchant treats his wares like fruit. He picks them the moment they reach maturity. Underripe they will be bland. At the other extreme they may be rotten.

Restaurants, too, he feels, can fall into the trap of mishandling

produce and serving it past its prime. He should know. He supplies more than 600 in a dozen countries, from the USA to Japan and throughout Europe. Early in the 1980s, when he was building his formidable reputation, he stopped supplying several hostelleries which he found to be mishandling his wares.

A sign of a restaurateur's knowledge of his cheeses is his response to their seasonal characteristics. A fresh goat's milk cheese, for example, is in its prime during the spring and summer. If it is on the menu between November and March, watch out. In order to maintain a continuity of supply, the factory solution is to work with frozen curd or even milk powder, which leave a furry taste on the palate.

"When the chef dishes up warm *chèvre* on a few salad greens at Christmas," M Olivier accuses, "I say that he's a bad chef." In passing, he notes that goats should graze on dry pastures since the grass has more flavour. This could be why the

northern European countries have no tradition of making fresh goat's milk cheeses.

For all his expertise, Philippe Olivier is ready to admit the subjective role that the imagination still plays in his appreciation. Not long ago he began to feel uneasy about the quality of a Munster he was receiving from Alsace. He rang several of his friends, also members of the Guilde des Fromagers, who agreed that there was a problem. Together they went on a study trip to Alsace to see whether they could uncover a better source.

"We sat down to Sunday lunch in a typical old *auberge*," he recounts, "dined on real quiche Lorraine, *choucroute* and a bottle of Gewürztraminer served by a pretty waitress, dressed in traditional costume. The Munster arrived. Fabulous! This, we agreed, is what we had been looking for for years. We asked the *patron* for the address of his supplier. He was buying from the same farm as we were.

"So the next day we went there and confronted the cheesemaker. 'You've got two qualities,' we accused, 'one for your friends and one for us.' But we were wrong. We'd succumbed to the charm of our surroundings. Eaten at home, at the kitchen table with your wife for company, take it from me, it won't taste the same. Nobody talks about that."

Philippe Olivier admits to a small personal preference for the mountain cheeses produced in Auvergne or in the Alps. These include mature, pressed cheeses: Comté, Cantal, Emmental or, his favourite, Beaufort. They form the base of several substantial regional dishes which can be a meal in themselves.

Some goat's milk cheeses lie ripening in Philippe Olivier's Boulogne cellars.



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ALIGOT

A cross between mashed potatoes and fondue, this is a rich supper dish to serve with sausages.

2½lb/1kg potatoes, peeled (large Belles de Fontenay are best)

1pt/150ml *crème fraîche*

9fl oz/250ml whole milk

14oz/400g Cantal, sliced

1 clove garlic, crushed

Boil and sieve the potatoes. Put them back in a pan and stir over a low flame. Stir in the cream and milk. The mixture should be piping hot. Incorporate the cheese. Beat well, lifting the mix with a wooden spoon so that it stretches out the *aligot*. Persist for a few minutes to render it smooth. Add the garlic, salt and pepper.

TRUFFADE

A golden potato pancake, eaten in Auvergne as a supper dish.

4fl oz/100ml sunflower oil

9oz/250g *lardons* (bacon cut cross-grain in fine dice)

1½lb/750g potato, peeled and thinly sliced

7oz/200g Cantal or Comté, grated

Coat a 12in/30cm frying-pan with the oil. Add the bacon and fry gently for a minute or so. Put the slices of potato into the pan and cook slowly until tender. Stir in the cheese and roughly crush the potato slices with the back of a fork. Turn up heat and fry until the bottom forms a crisp crust. Invert onto a plate and serve, cut in slices.

PATRANQUE

This variation of *truffade* uses slightly stale bread instead of potatoes.

small white loaf of bread (not factory-made)

milk (see recipe)

2oz/50g butter

8oz/225g Comté, Emmental,

Gruyère or Beaufort, grated

Cut the crusts from the bread. Slice and cut into large squares, and soak it in milk to cover. Gently squeeze out excess moisture. Heat butter in a 10in/25cm pan. Add the bread and the cheese. Turn up the heat. Cook until the bottom becomes golden brown and turn out □

Philippe Olivier insists that the best way to buy cheese is little and often.





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THE MYSTERY BRONZES OF BRINDISI

The chance discovery of a bronze foot on the sea-bed near the port of Brindisi led archaeologists to an exciting cache of Classical statues. David Downie reports.

On July 19, 1992, a glorious summer day in Apulia, Major Luigi Robusto of the Brindisi *carabinieri* brigade strapped on his scuba tanks near Punta del Serrone and swam out through the crystalline waters of the Adriatic for a pleasure dive. Suddenly, looming up among the swirling seaweed and limestone spurs, some 400 metres from shore, a greenish-black object caught his attention. He recognised it as a severed human foot. "I was horrified," he said. "I expected to touch rotting flesh, but when I gripped the foot I knew it was bronze."

Little did Robusto realise, as he surfaced and then rushed, foot in hand, to Brindisi's archaeology museum, that he had discovered one of the richest archaeological treasures of recent times. The Brindisi bronzes are a jumble of ancient statue parts mysteriously lost at sea perhaps 1,600 years ago. Among them are Classical heads, busts, draped torsos and fragments of many other sculptures produced in different countries over a period of 700 years, from the fourth century BC to the third century AD. No one yet knows who made them, where they came from or how and when they were lost. Perhaps they were the spoils of war—masterworks stolen from

PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENZO GAGLIANICO/SHUTTERSTOCK



Above, this finely detailed head, possibly of a philosopher, is thought to date from the third century BC. Copper was used to give realistic colour to the lips. Left, the second-century BC "Greek prince" resembles a bust in the National Roman Museum.

temples and public places and bound for the sumptuous villas of Rome—or merely broken parts of rejected statuary, sold to an itinerant scrap merchant. Further research, to be carried out this year, may throw light on the mystery.

Though international attention has only recently focused on the find, the

bronzes had been eluding local archaeologists for more than 20 years. In 1972 three sport divers brought up another bronze foot off Punta del Serrone, this one nearly half a metre long and probably belonging to a draped figure from the Late Empire that would have stood 4 metres high. But the divers were unable to relocate the spot, and subsequent searches proved fruitless. Since then archaeologists have been on the lookout for the rest of the statue. So when Major Robusto found the bronze foot an expedition was quickly organised.

Robusto led a team of experts, including the head of Italy's underwater archaeology services, Claudio Moccagiani-Carpano, to the location of his find. There, spread over an area the size of two tennis-courts, at a depth of about 15 metres, were hundreds of other pieces of statuary—limbs, heads and fragments of bronze—a watery graveyard of impressive works of art. A naval vessel equipped with a metal detector was sent in to investigate. The detector indicated hundreds of pieces of bronze lying on the sea-floor or buried under layers of white sand.

To protect the area and its contents the *carabinieri* quickly cordoned off the shore and set up sea patrols, and within two weeks full-scale excavation and recovery operations had started. The



Milan-based under-sea archaeology firm Aquarius was brought in by the government to raise the bronzes to the surface and to vacuum the sea-bed for fragments. Rome's art restoration department, l'Istituto Centrale per il Restauro, set up and supervised a field laboratory at the Brindisi museum, where the bronzes were cleaned, desalinated and placed in climate-controlled cases for permanent display.

Since many unguarded archaeological sites in Italy have been ruined by tomb-robbers and tourists, high security was enforced. "We didn't give the poachers time to get away with a single piece of bronze," boasts Mocchegiani-Carpano. And therein lies much of the importance of the find. Compared to the famous pair of Riace bronzes, found intact by sport divers and now in the National Museum in Reggio di Calabria, the Brindisi catch appears poor—a salesman's sampler of corroded relics. But to the archaeological community, and to international art historians, it is of great importance, as it represents seven centuries of the bronze-maker's art.

"The Brindisi bronzes are not in great shape, but from the artistic standpoint they are unquestionably fine works," says Angela Marinazzo, director of the Brindisi museum. "Once restored they will be beautiful."

Last summer's month-long excavation and subsequent sea-floor probing and mapping have so far revealed no complete sculptures and no evidence of a shipwreck. It is still unclear whether the works were whole or already damaged and fragmented when they hit the rocky bottom at Punta del Serrone, which lies just outside the busy harbour of Brindisi.

"I'm convinced each of these bronzes lived a life somewhere, in antiquity—in a

public square, as a monument, or in someone's private house," says Professor Giuseppe Andreassi, superintendent of the Italian government's archaeology service for Apulia and currently overall co-ordinator of the Brindisi operation. Andreassi does not believe the bronzes are foundry rejects. The so-called philosopher's head, a graceful sculpture with a flowing beard, probably made in the third century BC, was finished and detailed after being cast. The lips are of copper and the single remaining eye is probably a compound of silver or glass. "Copper was used for the lips and the nipples of bronze statues in ancient times because of its fleshy colour," says Andreassi, "and glass was used to give life to the eyes."

Another head, from the Late Empire, might represent Germanicus (15 BC-AD 19) or the Emperor Tiberius (42 BC-AD 37). The "Greek prince" head, so dubbed because it resembles a Hellenistic portrait bust in the National Roman Museum, dates from the second century BC. Two heads of young women have also been found. One of them, with finely sculpted hair, could be a portrait of Faustina the Younger, wife of Marcus Aurelius, who died in AD 176. Yet another head, this one with thick, curly hair, appears to be a portrait of either Caracalla (reigned AD 211-217) or Commodus (reigned AD 180-192).

Andreassi, Mocchegiani-Carpano and Marinazzo agree that the bronzes were probably collected from various Mediterranean ports in the late-third or early-fourth centuries, either as spoils of war or as scrap metal, and were being shipped to Italy to be melted down, to make weapons or other works of art.

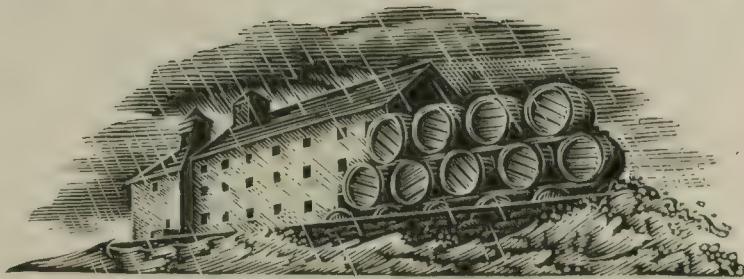
As the Roman Empire collapsed, the Mediterranean was torn by local wars

Above left, a statue rises from the "underwater cemetery" off Brindisi some 1,600 years after being lost at sea, probably on its way to a foundry to be melted down and recast. On board the salvage vessel, above, a statue is cleaned before undergoing restoration at the Brindisi museum. Despite the damage caused by long immersion in the Adriatic the bronzes may provide historians with important insights into Classical art and trade. Above right, an elegant hand is prepared for display. Below, a first-century BC head of a member of Julius Claudius's family.

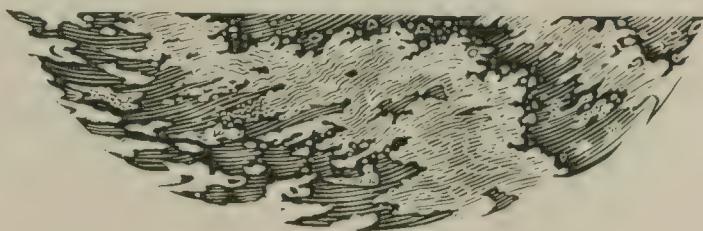




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and foreign incursions. When the Brindisi bronzes were lost, some of them might already have been broken. Curiously, there are no signs of cutting or toppling by plunderers. But the physical shock of the shipwreck, or of falling overboard, combined with the strong tides and exposure to corrosive salt water, may account for the damage. Likewise, the ship's hull could have been destroyed or swept away by powerful tides. Or the ship might simply have flipped over, or been dragged farther out to sea. The bronzes might even have been thrown overboard to lighten the craft as it sought the haven of Brindisi harbour in a storm.

One theory suggests that the bronzes adorned the streets of Brindisi and were being evacuated during a Barbarian invasion. But that begs the question why a local ship should sail out into a storm and be carrying such a hotchpotch of art from around the known world.

"The ancients never kept records of shipwrecks, or at least they haven't come down to our days," says Giuseppe Andreassi. "What we do have are records of major campaigns of sacking and pillaging—for example, when the Romans took Corinth in 146 BC and shipped quantities of art to Rome." No such record has so far been found that might relate to the shipment of Brindisi bronzes. Until a corresponding wreck is discovered, the precise dating and nature of the find will remain a riddle. Even then, final proof will be elusive: the sea around Brindisi is littered with sunken ships, stone anchors, amphorae and columns dating back thousands of years.

"Plenty of surprises are in store," says Andreassi, who anticipates another year of excavations and study. Meanwhile, Luigi Robusto has become a local hero, and Brindisi is still celebrating □



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LIQUID GOLD

Fine cognac depends on the successful marrying of Charente grapes with Limousin oak by a master blender, or "nose", such as Jean-Marc Olivier.

When Jean-Marc Olivier inhales the aroma of a glass of cognac and says it reminds him of an early-morning walk in the woods, he is referring to one of his professional duties. For you are just as likely to encounter Courvoisier's master blender inspecting oaks in a forest as you are to find him in a tasting-room, mixing draughts of *eau-de-vie* into fine brandy.

In fact the first stirrings of every cognac—a marriage of twice-distilled grape juices and the wooden casks in which they are aged—are in central France's Limousin forest. Here grow the trees which, when they reach between 120 and 200 years of age, Olivier personally selects for barrel-making. Some 5,000 of them are brought annually to the coopers, then for the next three years they are left outdoors in rain, hail and sunshine, to draw out characteristics in the wood that will later be imparted to the maturing *eau-de-vie*.

The cognac-producing grapes are grown just to the west of these vast forests, about 60 miles north of Bordeaux. When viewed from the air the demarcated area resembles a target, with six classifications of vineyards increasing in quality towards its centre and the towns of Cognac and Jarnac, where the great blending houses are based, as twin bull's-eyes.

These two hubs of the cognac industry exude an air of sleepy prosperity—and a heady scent of alcohol. Nothing disturbs the *eaux-de-vie*, which may lie for decades slowly maturing in ancient *chais* (warehouses) by the side of the willow-fringed Charente river. The towns themselves are an almost ghostly monochrome. Houses are built from the local white stone that provides the hostile yet ideal soil for the Ugni Blanc grape, which in its struggle for survival attains the perfect balance of low alcohol and high acidity. Many buildings are etched into relief by the black fungus that clings to the roofs and walls of any cognac store, feeding on what annually amounts to 21 million bottles' worth of evaporating fumes, known as "the angels' share".

But behind the closed, white shutters hides a thrusting, international industry that, although rooted in tradition and the soil, exports around 95 per cent of its



production. Indeed, many of these great French companies are foreign-owned.

Jean-Marc Olivier is the embodiment of the direction in which the cognac industry is now moving. A friendly, unpretentious science graduate from Paris, he had no previous connection with the business, but from childhood he has possessed a highly-developed sense of smell, which he nurtured into a flair for assessing wine when specialising in oenology at Montpellier University. He speaks fluent English, leavened with dashes of that country's humour, and admits that on his many business travels, especially to Japan, people are often surprised to discover that the portly veteran they were expecting is actually a trim 42-year-old.

After working as an independent consultant to a handful of small cognac houses Olivier joined Courvoisier in 1984 as assistant to the master blender and was quickly promoted to the top job. Since then he has been developing a range of new cognacs, especially focusing on the burgeoning Asian market, which is now third in importance after those in the USA and Britain. "When I came to Cognac the theory was that every blend should be 'international'; now we have realised that we need different blends for different palates."

The company has catered for its Far Eastern customers by introducing a VSOP which can happily be drunk with ice and water. Its stronger and more

pronounced character distinguishes it from some of Olivier's other new creations, such as the top-of-the-range Initiale Extra or the limited-edition Collection Erté decanters, with Art Deco labels designed by the late master, which are filled with a blend based on the finest grapes from the Cognac region's heart. These, too, were created with the Far East in mind, where premium brands are best-sellers, but should be drunk neat. "When I see Japanese people adding water to these, I have a heart attack," says Olivier, laughing as he clutches his chest in not entirely mock horror.

Known as a "nose"—he explains that the mouth can distinguish between only four basic flavours—Olivier heads a seven-strong tasting team that convenes at 11am, when the sense of smell is keenest. "It is impossible to analyse a good cognac," he says. "It's like music or art: it appeals to the emotions."

Unlike many other great drinks of the world—wine, port and champagne, for example—cognac does not declare vintages. The subject of introducing them is frequently raised, but Olivier is one of the majority who support the status quo, maintaining that a change would compromise cognac's consistent quality. As it is, *eaux-de-vie* from different years and vineyards are aged and mixed to achieve

Grape quality increases towards the centre of the Cognac region ("champagne" refers to fields not wine) through which the Charente runs.



Grape juice is double-distilled in burnished pot stills usually owned by individual growers.

a fixed personality specific to each brand, which in turn reflects the style of that cognac house. By law the *eaux-de-vie* that will eventually be blended into a VSOP cognac must spend a minimum of five years aging in the cask, although in practice those owned by houses like Courvoisier will remain in the *chais* for many more. Once an *eau-de-vie* reaches perfection it is bottled to halt its development. It can then be stored for future blending—for centuries if necessary. In Château Courvoisier's subterranean cavern, known as *le paradis*, lie bottles dating back to the French Revolution.

Once dubbed "the richest town in France", Cognac has long been a great trading centre, owing its early prominence to salt. Brandy first appeared

towards the end of the 17th century when a glut of wine and new per-barrel export taxes led to growers finding it more profitable to distil their export produce, which was then watered down upon arrival in England and Holland. Compared with wine, brandy took up far less space on the ships and did not spoil during the journey. What began as a rough brew evolved into a spirit of subtlety and complexity. Cognac has long been regarded as the king of brandies, and its jealously-guarded name can be used only on bottles from that region.

The Cognac of today continues to flourish. The immaculate vineyards benefit from the highest technology: at harvest time the fields are dotted not with jolly peasants bearing baskets but with H-shaped machines that slot over the vines and are driven along the rows. Nor is the wealth concentrated among the big cognac houses. Few of these own vineyards or distilleries, preferring to maintain quality by selecting and buying-in the pick of each year's crop wherever they find it. The grower usually has his own distillery and builds up a private stock of *eaux-de-vie*, using it as a "liquid gold" bank account.

This system can lead to a few surprises, as Olivier discovered when he received a telephone call from the daughter of a recently deceased grower, asking if Courvoisier would be interested in purchasing the contents of her father's private *paradis*. At the house Olivier was shown 21 demijohns filled with almost 100-year-old *eaux-de-vie*. "I tasted one and it was totally wonderful. I almost knelt in front of it. I decided instantly that we should buy them all." The result was 595 bottles of Succession JL, named after its grower. Soon word got out and chauffeurs began arriving at the gates of Château Courvoisier. The Japanese indicated that they would like to buy the whole consignment. Eventually they were allowed 300 bottles worth \$12,000 apiece, shipped to them in special foil wrapping that, in the event of disaster, would have enabled the cognac to survive for decades on the sea-bed. Now just 67 bottles remain.

Olivier says of Monsieur JL: "He was a genius. Many growers leave their *eaux-de-vie* in the barrel for far too long, but he stopped the aging process at exactly the right time. My one regret is that I never met him—what a discussion we could have had." Olivier's great hope is that he will one day stumble upon a worthy successor to Succession. Its name is already waiting: all he has to do is to substitute the new grower's initials.

□ Visitors are welcome at the Château Courvoisier museum, at Jarnac. For further information contact Courvoisier on 45 35 55 55.





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● The Hugh Johnson Collection (68 St James's Street SW1), named after its oenophile owner, is the place for lovers of fine wine. Look for the Connoisseur Range of glasses: white wine, champagne, red burgundy, claret and *grand cru*, all the correct shape for each particular wine. There is also an attractive modern version of a late-18th-century, three-ringed decanter. Wine accessories, coasters, corkscrews, silver labels (including one marked "plonk")—and copies of the owner's books and videos on wine are available.

● The Oriental Art Gallery (4 Davies Street, W1), although newly opened, has the appearance of a well-established gallery because its four directors boast more than 75 years of combined experience in Oriental antiques. Although their main expertise is in Chinese works of art, including bronzes, ceramics, lacquerware, glass, enamels, textiles, furniture and, particularly, jade, they also have Japanese and south-east Asian objects from the 12th century BC to the 19th century AD. Set on two floors, the gallery is the serious collector's dream, with such treasures as a T'ang horse and a Ming gilt bronze of a Buddha.

● Hackett's new flagship store (137 Sloane Street, SW1) stocks the complete gentleman's wardrobe. Traditional values of quality, attention to detail and service give an Edwardian atmosphere. Formal wear, business and country suits (at about half the price charged by Savile Row tailors) jostle with more whimsical and casual clothes: pastel-coloured linen waistcoats to go with morning wear, or bright silk ones to wear with dinner-jackets. The "Hackett look"—tweed jacket with yellow, blue or red corduroy trousers—is much in evidence. An excellent range of shirts, including Hackett's own blue Prince of Wales check. Fun socks with contrasting toes and heels are worth a try. Tailor and barber's shop on the premises.

● Harvey Nichols (Knightsbridge, SW1) is London's newest gourmet Mecca: up on the fifth floor is the food hall, with restaurant and café. Row upon row of exotic



Chinese embroidered silk rank-badge at the Oriental Art Gallery.

and unusual produce: dozens of types of freshly baked breads, 20 different coffees and 175 brands of tea. Sample before you choose from a range of 175 cheeses. Here, too, are unusual fish and crustacea, even sea-urchins, from all over the world, and a collection of rare wines and spirits. Where else in London can you find a whole *foie gras* at £25 a pound?

● Simon Horn (117 Wandsworth Bridge Road, SW6) will advise on how to transform your bedroom, perhaps by treating yourself to a custom-built French bed. Known as the Bed Man, Horn has more than 50 styles for you to choose from. Should you not find exactly what you want, he will design a bed to order.

● Ulrich Engler (108 Tachbrook Street, SW1; 071-233 7420, by appointment only) offers a made-to-measure look in ladies' fashions at off-the-peg prices. Choose your wardrobe from the collection of suits, day and evening dresses, each style from a limited edition of five. Wedding dresses are a speciality.

● Tapestry Designs (071-228 2606, by appointment only) enable you to immortalise your dog, your house or even yourself in needle-point. They transpose the image from a photograph or drawing on to a canvas for you to work yourself. Nothing is too difficult or too simple, from reproducing an intricate curtain material for cushions, to a monogram or coat of arms. They prefer not to supply the wool, but will advise on colours and the best suppliers.

● Amagansett (201 King's Road, SW3, and Unit 16, Thomas Neal Centre, Earlham Street, WC2) provides a relaxed environment, modelled on a Long Island beach house and equipped with sofas, television and a constant supply of coffee, for choosing men's casual wear. The accent is on comfort with a strong sporting flavour; the style is classic with a twist,



LONDON SHOPS



Jane Asher designs personalised cakes for children and adults.

such as a blazer with Amagansett turtle buttons. A womenswear department is due to open in March on an upper floor of the King's Road shop; it will stock a range of classic casual clothes.

● **Swaine, Adeney, Brigg** (185 Piccadilly, W1) is known for its range of luggage and probably the finest umbrellas in the world—cotton with Malaccan cane or hickory handle, or silk with a silver-tipped handle—designed never to blow inside out, even in the strongest winds. Excellent leatherwork: the briefcase (designed to take a lap-top computer or mobile telephone) will last a lifetime.

● **Hennell** (12 New Bond Street, W1) has designed a new Rococo Collection of jewellery inspired by popular motifs from the mid-18th century. Ten disparate styles of necklace, ear-rings and bracelet are in 18-carat gold, silver or the unusual combination of silver gilt and 23-carat gold—all shown off to great effect in cabinets by David Linley. In the silver vaults below are examples of antique Hennell silver, especially the salt-cellars for which the firm has been renowned since 1736.

● **Jane Asher Party Cakes** (24 Cale Street, SW3) will bring a touch of drama to your table with a custom-made cake. Hundreds of photographs are on hand to stimulate ideas, but the actress relishes the challenge to design something new. Specialities are children's party cakes, personalised birthday cakes, even corporate cakes. A week's notice is preferred.

● **Sandra Cronan** (18 Burlington Arcade, W1) can supply a really unusual piece of jewellery, such as a peacock-feather brooch set with emeralds, *en tremblant*, or a pair of 18-carat gold spurs. In her collection of esoteric, rare and antique jewellery there are cuff-links

ranging in date from the 1930s back to the 17th century (see the pair in Stuart crystal commemorating the marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza in 1662). For something more modern, commission a pair to your exact requirements.

● **Parterre** (8 Marylebone Passage, off Wells Street, W1) is a florist's with a difference. Besides a daily supply of fresh, cut flowers, it concentrates on unusual dried-flower arrangements: a red rose "tree" for St Valentine's Day, tiny topiary trees (such as its witty sheep), or a Teddy bear in moss. Intriguing containers are made from exotic leaves and twigs.

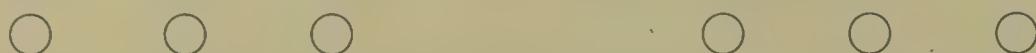
● **The Royal Opera House** (Covent Garden, WC2) has enlarged its shop to offer a wider range of wares to delight music-lovers: videos, CDs and, for the *cognoscenti*, libretti. A selection of historic videos includes such golden voices from the past as Jussi Björling, Lauritz Melchior, Renata Tebaldi and Franco Corelli. There are disposable opera-glasses at a mere £1.95, black fans to keep guests cool and even its own eau-de-Cologne, appropriately called First Night. Belinda the ballerina bear has proved to be a great favourite with collectors of soft toys, both young and old.

● **Harry Fane** (13 Duke Street, SW1; 071-930 8606, by appointment only) has quite the best, and the most unusual, selection of Cartier *objets d'art*. Feast your eyes on such rarities as a 1920s Cartier tank watch, a pocket watch set in an 1889 \$20 gold coin, or Consuelo Vanderbilt's enamel powder compact. With his eye for style, design and beauty, Harry Fane also specialises in Verdura jewellery.

● **Renwick & Clark** (Plaza, 535 King's Road, SW10) will supply distinctive furniture and accessories for home and garden. Ceramics, glass, pewter and bronze, and a wide range of porcelain (including a reproduction dinner service based on one made for the Duke of Gloucester in 1770), reproduction Georgian wine glasses and pewter under-plates are all on the shelves. Also on display are Recollections' replicas of treasures from National Trust houses and museums. For the garden there is everything from a modest watering-can from Sissinghurst or a Gothic garden chair to an espalier apple tree in bronze.

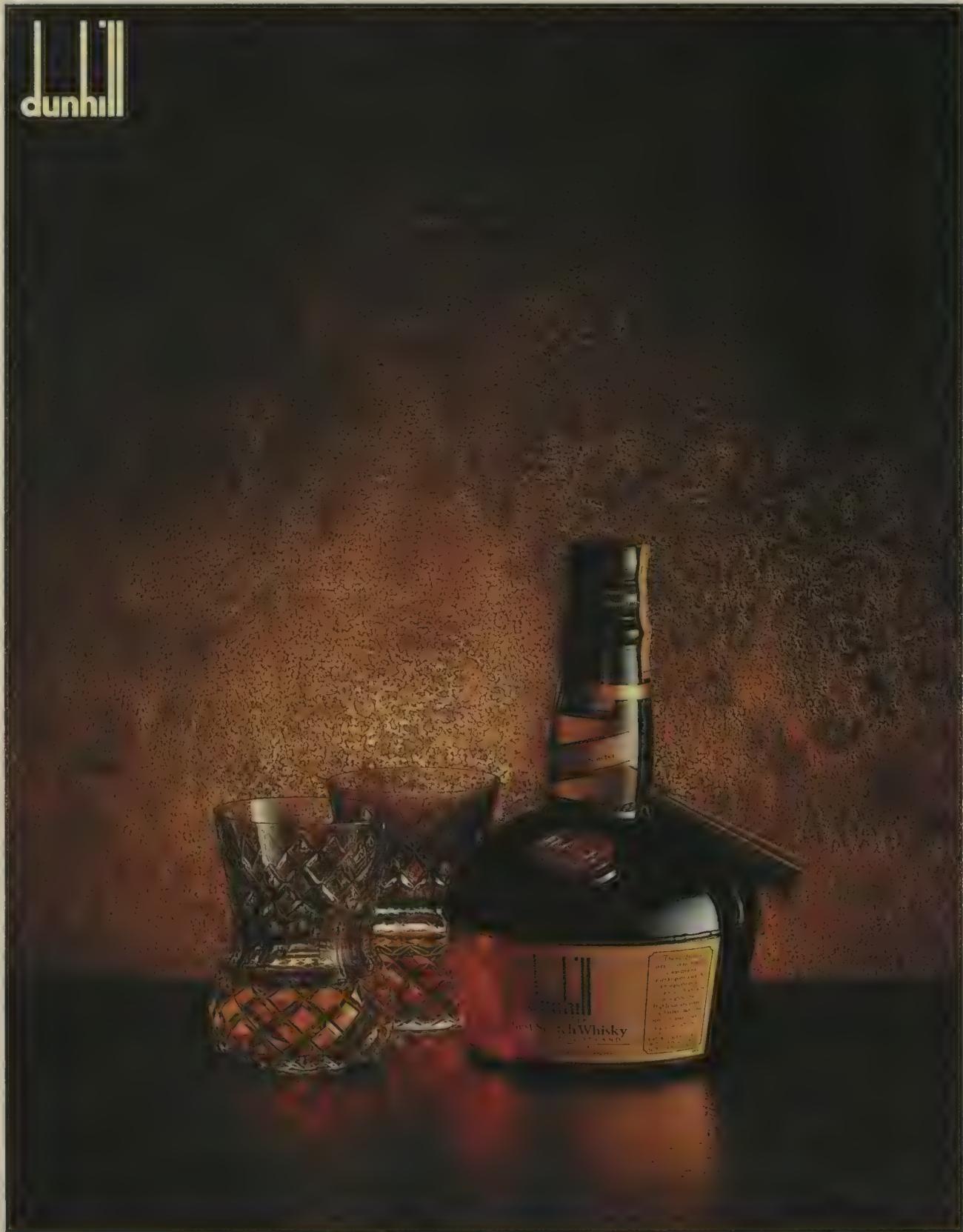
● **Carluccio's** (28A Neal Street, WC2) emporium of authentic Italian fare is named after its famous owner, "mushroom man" Antonio, and situated next door to his restaurant. Expect exotic, unusual treats: fresh produce, own-label preserves and delicacies rushed from Italy. For spring, watch for the first crops of wild mushrooms, rocket, garlic and dandelion leaves alongside the changing daily selection of fresh pasta (including varieties flavoured with beetroot, cuttlefish ink and truffles). From April 8 Antonio's latest book, *A Passion for Pasta*, will also be on sale.

Compiled by Nicholas Courtney.





— ALFRED DUNHILL —



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ILNS SELECTIVE GUIDE TO SOME OF LONDON'S
MOST INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING EVENTS

BEST OF SPRING

THEATRE

Two major dramatists have new work opening in London: Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* is presented at the National & Athol Fugard is directing the British première of his *Playland* at the Donmar. Maggie Smith is Lady Bracknell in *The Importance of Being Earnest* & Alan Howard takes on the title role in *Macbeth*.

Addresses & telephone numbers are given on the first occasion a theatre's entry appears.

Arcadia. Trevor Nunn directs Tom Stoppard's latest play, which is set in a country house in 1809 & 1899. With Felicity Kendal & Harriet Walter. Opens Apr 13. *Lyttelton, National Theatre, South Bank SE1* (071-9282252).

As You Like It. Kate Buffery is Rosalind & Peter de Jersey is Orlando in David Thacker's production. Opens Apr 21. *Barbican Theatre, Barbican, EC2* (071-6388891).

The Beggar's Opera. John Gay's 1728 ballad-opera features David Burt as Macheath, Elizabeth Renihan as Polly & Jenna Russell as Lucy. John Caird directs. Opens Apr 7. *Barbican Theatre, Barbican*.

Billy Liar. Mildly amusing revival of a 1959 comedy by Keith Waterhouse & Willis Hall about an undertaker's clerk with a vivid imagination. Until Mar 17. *Cottesloe, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1* (071-9282252).

Carousel. Nicholas Hytner directs an athletic & technically impressive production of the Rodgers & Hammerstein musical about the doomed love affair between a New England mill girl & a carnival barker who returns from heaven to sort out his family's affairs. Until Mar 27. *Lyttelton, National Theatre*.

Chatsky. Anthony Burgess translates Alexander Griboyedov's Russian comedy about an intellectual rebel. With Colin Firth, Dinsdale Landen & Jemma Redgrave. Mar 11-Apr 24. *Almeida Theatre, Almeida St, N1* (071-3594404).

City of Angels. Broadway musical comedy by Larry Gelbart & Cy Coleman that spoofs 1940s private-eye movies. With Roger Allam, Haydn Gwynne, Henry Goodman & Fiona Hendley. Michael Blakemore directs. Opens Mar 30. *Prince of Wales, Coventry St, W1* (071-8395987).

Crazy for You. Mike Ockrent directs this Tony Award-winning musical comedy incorporating popular Gershwin songs. With Ruthie Henshall, Kirby Ward, Chris Langham & Avril Angers. *Prince Edward, Old Compton St, W1* (071-7348951).

Cyrano de Bergerac. In the title role Robert Lindsay is more swashbuckling romantic than poignant poet in John Wells's adaptation of Edmond Rostand's play. It is funny & stylishly played, with Lindsay's engaging star turn well supported by Julian Glover & Stella Gonet. *Theatre Royal, Haymarket, SW1* (071-9308800).

The Game of Love & Chance. Marivaux's 1730 comedy about the dilemmas facing a spirited woman, the cool Maggie Steed, who refuses to marry transfers awkwardly to the 1930s. Caroline Quentin is entertainingly outrageous as the maid. Until Apr 17. *Cottesloe, National Theatre*.

The Gift of the Gorgon. Highly theatrical new play by Peter Shaffer exploring reason & revenge. A wife (Judi Dench) recalls her stormy marriage with a playwright (Michael Pennington) in a mixture of flashbacks & fantasies (including Greek myth & a bloody finale). Intense performances & Peter Hall's taut direction hold the attention. Until Mar 11. *The Pit, Barbican, EC2* (071-6388891); from Mar 23, *Wyndham's, Charing Cross Rd, WC2* (071-8671111).

Hay Fever. A vibrant, if occasionally over-acted, revival of Noël Coward's comedy of bad manners set during a country-house weekend. The production complements Coward's verbal wit with some inventive physical comedy. Maria Aitken is superb as the hostess & Sara Crowe & Christopher Goodwin are hilarious as two of



Dench & Pennington in Peter Shaffer's drama *The Gift of the Gorgon*.

the ill-assorted guests. *Albery, St Martin's Lane, WC2* (071-8671115).

An Ideal Husband. Enjoyable production of Oscar Wilde's play about political corruption involving the blackmailing of a London diplomat. Director Peter Hall plays down the creaky melodrama & heightens the social comedy. In a strong cast Martin Shaw is excellent as a Wildean lord. With Anna Carteret, Michael Denison, Hannah Gordon, Dulcie Gray & David Yelland. *Globe, Shaftesbury Ave, W1* (071-4945067).

The Importance of Being Earnest. Nicholas Hytner directs Maggie Smith as Lady Bracknell, with Richard E. Grant, Alex Jennings, Susannah Harker, Margaret Tyzack & Richard Pearson. Opens Mar 9. *Aldwych Theatre, Aldwych, WC2* (071-8366404).

An Inspector Calls. The startling staging & intense performances over-emphasise the themes & ultimately diminish the power of Priestley's 1945 moral thriller. With Kenneth Cranham, Richard Pasco & Barbara Leigh-Hunt. *Olivier, National Theatre, South Bank, SE1* (071-9282252).

The Invisible Man. Ken Hill turns H.G. Wells's novel into an Edwardian music-hall melodrama combining broad comedy with mystery & intriguing stage illusions. *Vaudeville, Strand, WC2* (071-8369987).

It Runs in the Family. Latest farce by Ray Cooney about a neurologist's efforts to keep his illegitimate teenage son a secret. *Playhouse, Northumberland Ave, WC2* (071-8394401).

A Jovial Crew. A little-known 1641 comedy about two daughters of a landowner who join a gang of vagrants. Opens Apr 22. *The Pit, Barbican*.

King Lear. Max Stafford-Clark directs Tom Wilkinson in the title role. With Adrian Dunbar, Iain Glen & Saskia Reeves. Until Mar 20. *Royal Court, Sloane Sq, SW1* (071-7301745).

Kiss of the Spider Woman: The Musical. Harold Prince directs this adaptation of Manuel Puig's novel

about disparate cellmates in a South American gaol. Until Mar 27, with Chita Rivera, Brent Carver & Anthony Crivello; from Mar 29, Bebe Neuwirth, Jeff Hyslop & Charles Pistone. *Shaftesbury Theatre, Shaftesbury Ave, WC2* (071-3795399).

The Last Yankee. Arthur Miller's latest play is set in a New England psychiatric ward where two clinically-depressed wives (Zoë Wanamaker & Helen Burns) are visited by their husbands (Peter Davison & David Healy). A 90-minute drama of affecting moments with an excellent cast. Until Mar 27. *Young Vic, The Cut, SE1* (071-9286363).

Lost in Yonkers. A widower's two sons are forced to stay with their tyrannical grandmother (Rosemary Harris) & child-like aunt (a superb Maureen Lipman) in 1942 New York. Neil Simon's sharply written comedy of familial conflict is a slick mixture of laughter & tears that treats its more serious themes with soft-focus sentimentality. *Strand Theatre, Aldwych, WC2* (071-9308800).

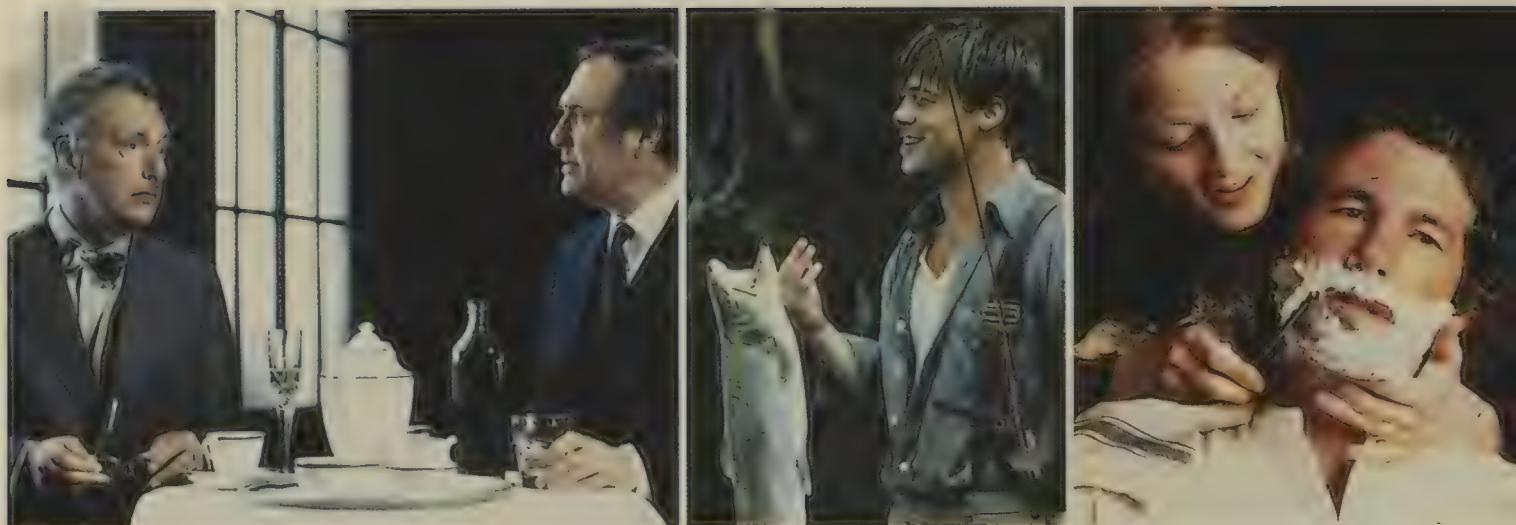
Macbeth. Alan Howard & Anastasia Hille are the Macbeths in Richard Eyre's production. Opens Apr 1. *Olivier, National Theatre*.

Misery. Simon Moore directs his adaptation of Stephen King's novel about an injured romantic novelist held captive by his self-proclaimed greatest fan. Strong performances from Sharon Gless & Bill Paterson cannot overcome the diminishing menace due to the episodic structure & a muddled climax. *Criterion, Piccadilly Circus, W1* (071-8394488).

Mr A's Amazing Maze Plays. Evil Mr Accousticus steals sounds in Alan Ayckbourn's family play with the audience dictating the course of the action. *Cottesloe, National Theatre*.

Murder is Easy. Clive Exton adapts Agatha Christie's novel. With Nigel Davenport, Peter Capaldi & Charlotte Attenborough. *Duke of York's, St Martin's Lane, WC2* (071-8365122).

No Man's Land. Harold Pinter appears with Paul Eddington in his



Tea for two in No Man's Land with Eddington & Pinter. Brad Pitt in A River Runs Through It. A close shave for Jodie Foster & Richard Gere in Sommersby.

own 1975 play about the enigmatic meeting of two literary men. Pinter's wooden acting is compensated by Eddington's acutely funny performance and some strong support from Douglas Hodge & Gawn Grainger as sinister menservants. Until Apr 24. *Comedy, Panton St, SW1 (071-867 1045).*

On the Ledge. William Dudley directs a new comedy by Alan Bleasdale set on the roof & ledges of an inner-city tower block on Bonfire Night. With Mark McGann. Opens Apr 27. *Lytton, National Theatre.*

On the Piste. John Godber's latest comedy satirises skiers both on & off the slopes. With Paul Bown & Ivan Kaye. *Garrick, Charing Cross Rd, WC2 (071-494 5085).*

Our Song. Keith Waterhouse adapts his own novel about a love affair between a middle-aged advertising executive (Peter O'Toole at his world-weary best) & a vivacious young woman (Tara Fitzgerald). Effective moments of humour & heartache do not make up for an unsatisfying whole. Until Mar 13. *Apollo, Shaftesbury Ave, W1 (071-494 5070).*

Playland. South African playwright Athol Fugard directs his latest play about a meeting between a war veteran & an amusement park night-watchman. With John Kani & Sean Taylor, from the original Market Theatre of Johannesburg production. Until Apr 17. *Donmar Warehouse, Earlham St, WC2 (071-867 1150).*

Robin: Prince of Sherwood. A new musical by Rick Fenn & Peter Howarth with Mike Holoway as Robin. *Piccadilly Theatre, Denman St, W1 (071-867 1118).*

The School of Night. Peter Whelan's new drama explores the life & death of Christopher Marlowe, played by Richard McCabe. Opens Apr 6. *The Pit, Barbican.*

The Showman. Alan Bates stars in the British première of an Austrian comedy by Thomas Bernhard about an egotistical actor touring the provinces. Opens May 6. *Almeida Theatre.*

Travels with My Aunt. Giles Havergal's eccentric adaptation of Graham Greene's novel about a retired bank manager who is drawn into a web of intrigue by his globetrotting aunt. Four actors play 20 or so characters in what is less a play and more a *tour de force* of comic acting. Until Mar 13. *Wyndham's.*

The Treatment. A woman hopes to turn the story of her oppressive marriage into a film in Martin Crimp's satire. Opens Apr 15. *Royal Court, Sloane Sq.*

Trelawny of the "Wells". Arthur Wing Pinero's 1898 backstage comedy of Victorian theatre folk, with Helen McCrory in the title role as a young actress in a Sadler's Wells company. John Caird directs. With Robin Bailey, Michael Bryant, Bridget Turner & Betty Marsden. *Olivier, National Theatre.*

RECOMMENDED LONG RUNNERS

Blood Brothers. *Phoenix (071-867 1044); Buddy, Victoria Palace (071-834 1317); Cats, New London (071-405 0072); Five Guys Named Moe, Lyric (071-494 5045); Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Palladium (071-494 5020); Les Misérables, Palace (071-434 0909); Miss Saigon, Theatre Royal, Drury Lane (071-494 5060); The Mouse-trap, St Martin's (071-836 1443); The Phantom of the Opera, Her Majesty's (071-494 5400); Starlight Express, Apollo Victoria (071-630 6262); The Woman in Black, Fortune (071-836 2238).*

OUT OF TOWN

RSC season at Stratford: At the Royal Shakespeare Theatre: *Hamlet*, directed by Adrian Noble, with Kenneth Branagh as the Prince, Jane Lapotaire as Gertrude & Joanne Pearce as Ophelia. Mar 18-May 1. At the Swan Theatre: *Richard III*, directed by Sam Mendes, with Simon Russell Beale in the title role. Mar 18-May 1. *Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6BB (0789 295623).*

CINEMA

Two epics on recent American history are released this month: Malcolm X, with a superb lead performance by Denzel Washington, & Hoffa, with Jack Nicholson as a union boss. Sommersby is a rare example of an American remake of a French film that improves on the original, & Al Pacino impresses as a blind man who is determined to enjoy his life to the full in Scent of a Woman.

Accidental Hero (15). Dustin Hoffman plays a petty crook who, by chance, is the only person on the scene of a crashed airliner. He saves the lives of all aboard but then disappears from the site. Andy Garcia, another social misfit, steps forward to claim the huge reward offered to the unknown rescuer. Garcia is humble, saintly & concerned, a natural media hero, while Hoffman can never be anything other than repulsive. A satisfactory compromise must be found. Stephen Frears explores this interesting idea, & it is well-handled until the slightly glib outcome. Opens April 16.

Blow-Up (15). Michelangelo Antonioni's 1966 film is hypnotic & mysterious & now a period piece. His hero is a key figure in the Swinging 60s psyche, a London fashion photographer (David Hemmings) who, after casually snapping a couple in a London park, examines his negatives & thinks he has inadvertently photographed a murder. He goes back to the park & finds the body, but later it is missing & his pictures have gone.

There is no way of knowing whether the camera has told the truth. Opens Apr 30.

Candyman (18). British director Bernard Rose's first American film is based on a Clive Barker horror story. Virginia Madsen is researching urban mythology when she stumbles on the legend of the Candyman, a huge killer with a hook for a hand who haunts a

decayed municipal housing project. The movie is much better than most films of its genre. Opens Mar 19.

Forever Young (PG). Mel Gibson plays a test pilot in 1939 whose girl is hit by a truck & goes into a coma. Deeply upset, he offers to be frozen by a friend who has developed cryogenics & is then accidentally forgotten. He is roused by two small boys in the 1990s to enter a world of push-button phones & fast food. Can his beloved still be alive, & if so how will he react to her being in her mid-80s? Steve Miner's film is not strong on plausibility, but Gibson's performance transcends the nonsense. Opens Mar 26.

Hoffa (15). Jack Nicholson plays Jimmy Hoffa, the leader of the Teamsters, the powerful American independent labour union, who vanished mysteriously in the 1960s. Directed by Danny DeVito & scripted by David Mamet, the film is a view of the old-fashioned face of American labour, with the union boss at one with the mobsters who are behind contrived disputes. Even American audiences found this account of their own industrial history incoherent. It seems like a succession of inexplicable conflicts, with Nicholson spouting blustering claptrap, but making it sound almost convincing by his sheer presence. Opens Mar 19.

Knife in the Water (PG). Roman Polanski's impressive first feature, made in 1962 in black & white, is an intense psychological drama. A middle-aged married couple pick up a young man on their way to spend a weekend aboard their yacht. Under sail jealous tensions develop. Polanski, a master of storytelling, even makes the claustrophobic setting work to his advantage. Opens Mar 12.

Lorenzo's Oil (12). The true story of a couple, played by Nick Nolte & Susan Sarandon, who refused to believe their five-year-old son's degenerative disease was incurable. They carried out their own research & became specialists in the disease, to face the medical establishment head-



Al Pacino enjoys the sweet smell of excess in *Scent of a Woman*. Denzel Washington plays Malcolm X. Andrew Shore in the title role of *Don Pasquale* for ENO.

on. Director George Miller makes this thoughtful drama both moving & gripping.

Malcolm X (15). A long but compelling movie with, at its heart, a monumental performance from Denzel Washington. Malcolm X was a petty criminal in Harlem who saw the light, created himself anew & became an ascetic. His charismatic leadership of the American Black Muslims, which started the 1960s concept of black pride, culminated in his martyrdom at the hands of an assassin. Washington's acting is subtly controlled, gaining momentum as the story rolls on, & although director Spike Lee's viewpoint of the plight of American blacks is understandably slanted, it is also revealing to white audiences. Opens Mar 5.

Mr Saturday Night (15). Billy Crystal, in his first film as director, also appears as a Jewish stand-up comedian, a mocking iconoclast whose private life & relationship with his wife & daughter are unsettled. His brother (David Paymer) is his foil &, subtly, also his drive. Crystal in character in front of an audience is brilliantly astringent, irreverent & funny, but offstage there are moments that come close to schmaltz. Opens Apr 23.

One False Move (18). A low-budget, violent thriller examining the complex inter-racial relationships between three drug-dealing fugitives. The film heralds an exciting new directorial talent, Carl Franklin. Opens Apr 9.

A River Runs Through It (PG). Robert Redford's film, based on Norman Maclean's account of life in Montana in the early 20th century, combines breathtaking scenery with an absorption in the mysterious wisdom that comes from fly-fishing. Two brothers, one thoughtful & serious, played by Craig Sheffer, & the other wild & unpredictable, played by Brad Pitt, share with their father, Tom Skerritt, a passion for catching fish in rippling streams, as though

somehow it unlocks the reason for existence. The film is at its best here, not in the scenes away from the river.

Scent of a Woman (15). Al Pacino gives an astonishing performance as a life-loving, blinded ex-colonel. He hires a perturbed teenager, Chris O'Donnell, as his minder, & embarks on a hedonistic Thanksgiving weekend in New York, intending it to be his last fling before suicide. Instead the pair engage in a delightful series of liberating incidents, with Pacino dancing a tango with a beautiful girl & test-driving a Ferrari to O'Donnell's directions, & each eases the other's torments. It is calculatedly heartwarming, but Pacino ensures that it is never banal. Opens Mar 12.

Sommersby (12). The American remake of *The Return of Martin Guerre* is a surprise because the story has actually gained strength by being transferred from 16th-century France to the post-Civil War Tennessee of the 1860s. Richard Gere is a curious opportunist who takes on the identity of a fellow prisoner in a Yankee gaol, passing himself off in the war-ravaged country community, where his wife, Jodie Foster, finds him literally a new man. He inspires the self-pitying farmers to grow tobacco, & restores their fortunes & confidence. But the crimes of his *doppelgänger* catch up. Jon Amiel's film looks superb; he has an eye for period detail & the cinematography avoids the conventional Hollywood high gloss. Opens Apr 23.

Toys (PG). Robin Williams is fighting for control of his late father's toy factory against a demented military sibling, Michael Gambon, who secretly wants to use child computer-game aces to zap real foes. The visual style of the lavish production design combines the surreal surprises of Magritte with the empty green fields of Andrew Wyeth. The chief problem is that the film is unsure of whom it is addressing. Williams, too, seems unduly restrained, & only in brief moments does his original, offbeat humour break through. Opens Mar 5.

OPERA

The coming weeks offer a chance to catch a series of rarely performed operas: two French masterpieces, *Pelléas & Mélisande* & *La Damnation de Faust* at Covent Garden; *Ariodante* by Handel at London's Coliseum; Bellini's *Norma* in Glasgow; & *La gioconda* by Ponchielli in Leeds. Welsh National's spring tour, which ends in London, offers Donizetti's *La favorita* & a finely sung *Tristan & Isolde*.

D'OYLY CARTE OPERA COMPANY
Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC2 (071-2788916).

Orpheus in the Underworld. Apr 19-21, 29, 30, May 1. **Pirates of Penzance.** Apr 22-24, 26-28.

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA
London Coliseum, St Martin's Lane, WC2 (071-8363161/071-2405258).

The Mikado. Jonathan Miller's irreverent transposition of the action to the foyer of an English hotel in the 1920s, combined with brilliant dancing & outstanding performances from the cast, brings a new lease of life to this G&S classic. Mar 4, 13(m&e), 16,

18, 24, 27, 31, Apr 8, 15, 17(m&e), 21, 23. **Rigoletto.** Another highly successful Jonathan Miller staging, which transfers the drama to the world of the New York mob in the 1950s, with Arthur Davies as the "Duke" & Jonathan Summers/John Rawnsley as Rigoletto. Mar 5, 10, 12.

Don Pasquale. Patrick Mason's updated production has Andrew Shore as the pompous chairman of Pasquale Holdings & Rosemary Joshua as the sparkling Norina in charge of a Roman street kiosk. Mar 6, 11(m&e), 15, 19, 22, 25, Apr 1, 5. **The Duel of Tancredi & Clorinda, Bluebeard's Castle.** Interesting double bill, each work comprising a confrontation between two people; production by David Alden. Mar 17, 20, 23, 26, Apr 2, 7.

The Queen of Spades. Graeme Matheson-Bruce sings Hermann, with Janice Cairns as Lisa, in David Pountney's staging; Sian Edwards conducts. Apr 3, 6, 10, 16, 22, 24, 27, 30.

Ariodante. New production by David Alden, with Ann Murray singing the title role & Amanda Roocroft as Ginevra, conducted by Nicholas McGegan. Apr 28, May 1, 5, 7, 12.

ROYAL OPERA
Covent Garden, WC2 (071-2401200).

Turandot. Gwyneth Jones sings the title role, with Giorgio Lamberti/Vladimir Popov as Calaf, Judith Howarth as Liù. Mar 4, 6, 9, 11, 13.

La Damnation de Faust. Colin Davis conducts Harry Kupfer's production; Jerry Hadley sings Faust, with Olga Borodina as Marguérite & Samuel Ramey as Méphistophélès. Mar 8, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 25.

Pelléas & Mélisande. François Le Roux & Frederica von Stade sing the doomed lovers, with Ruggero Raimondi as Golaud; Claudio Abbado/Claire Gibault conducts. Mar 24, 26, 29, 31, Apr 5, 8.

Fidelio. Josephine Barstow sings Leonore, with Josef Protschka as Florestan, Kurt Rydl as Rocco, in a new staging by Patrick Young. Jeffrey Tate conducts. Mar 30, Apr 2, 6, 10, 12, 15.

Jenůfa. Yuri Lyubimov's powerful production is conducted by David Atherton, with Nancy Gustafson as Jenůfa, Anja Silja as the Kostelníčka. Apr 20, 22, 29, May 5, 7.

OUT OF TOWN

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA

Falstaff, Così fan tutte.

The Hawth, Crawley (0293 553636); Mar 4-6. Theatre Royal, Brighton (0273 328488); Mar 9-13. Arts Centre, Poole (0202 685222); Mar 16-20. Wyvern, Swindon (0793 524481); Mar 23-27. Octagon, Yeovil (0935 22884); Mar 30-Apr 3. Corn Exchange, Cambridge (0223 357851); Apr 13-17. Civic, Darlington (0325 486555); Apr 19-21. Charter, Preston (0772 58858); Apr 23, 24. Hexagon, Reading (0734 591591); Apr 27-May 1. Northcott, Exeter (0392 54853); May 4-8.



Welsh National's *Tristan & Isolde* in London. Arc Dance Company at Sadler's Wells. Yuri Bashmet at the Barbican. John Eliot Gardiner conducts *Messiah*.

OPERA NORTH

Grand Theatre, Leeds (0532 459351).

La Bohème. Jane Leslie MacKenzie & David Maxwell Anderson sing Mimi & Rodolfo. Apr 16,22,28,30, May 12,19,22.

La gioconda. Rosalind Plowright sings the title role, with Edmund Barham as Enzo. May 1,11,14,17,20.

Wozzeck. May 13,15,18,21.

SCOTTISH OPERA

The Magic Flute. Mar 30, Apr 1,3.

La Bohème. Mar 31, Apr 2.

Theatre Royal, Newcastle (091-232 2061).

Norma. Jane Eaglen sings the title role in Ian Judge's production. Apr 21,24,27, May 1,6.

Eugene Onegin. Johannes Mannov & Cheryl Barker sing Onegin & Tatyana. May 5,8.

Theatre Royal, Glasgow (041-332 9000).

WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

New Theatre, Cardiff (0222 394844).

Un ballo in maschera. Richard Margison sings Gustav III, with Lisa Gasteen as Amelia & Donald Maxwell as Anckström. Mar 4.

La favorita. Bernadette Cullen sings the title role in Rennie Wright's production, with Bonaventura Bottone as Fernando. Mar 5.

Tristan & Isolde. Outstandingly sung performances by Jeffrey Lawton & Anne Evans, who both convey the emotional depths of Wagner's score, which is conducted with care for both the music & drama by Charles Mackerras. Yannis Kokkos's production is sparsely designed but atmospherically effective. Fine support from Peter Rose as King Marke & Della Jones as Brangäne. Mar 6.

Also **La Bohème.**

*Hippodrome, Bristol, (0272 299444); Mar 9-13. Empire, Liverpool (051-709 1555); Mar 16-20. Mayflower, Southampton (0703 229771); Mar 23-27. Apollo, Oxford (0865 244544); Mar 30-Apr 3. Grand, Swansea (0792 475715) not *Tristan*; Apr 6-10. Hippodrome, Birmingham (021-6227486); Apr 13-17.*

Tristan und Isolde, La favorita, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066); Apr 19-24.

DANCE

At the Royal Ballet Dowell will restage Baryshnikov's version of *Don Quixote*; & *The Sleeping Beauty* returns for the first time since 1987, under the supervision of Ninette de Valois. Maurice Béjart brings his new company to Sadler's Wells with ballets inspired by major cinema personalities.

Arc Dance Company. Kim Brandstrup presents *Antic*, a dance drama based on *Hamlet*. April 15-17. *Sadler's Wells, Rosebery Ave, EC2 (071-2788916).*

Béjart Ballet Lausanne. Maurice Béjart's new company performs ballets dedicated to Chaplin, Pasolini, Lang. Sylvie Guillem appears as a guest artist. Three programmes. Mar 25-Apr 3. *Sadler's Wells*.

Laurie Booth & Company. New show created with sculptor Anish Kapoor & sound artist Hans Peter Kuhn. Mar 27,28. *Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-9288900).*

The Cholmondeleys & Featherstonehaughs. The two groups in Lea Anderson's *Precious*, based on the theory of the philosopher's stone. Mar 30-Apr 10. *The Place, 17 Duke's Rd, WC1 (071-3870031).*

Royal Ballet. Triple bill: Stravinsky's *Firebird*; *Tombeaux*, David Bintley's newest work; William Forsythe's *In the middle, somewhat elevated*. Mar 10,16. *The Sleeping Beauty*, Mar 19,27 (m&e), Apr 3. *Don Quixote*, new production by Anthony Dowell, Apr 7,10(m),13,14,16,17,26,28, May 1,3,8 (m&e), 11,12 (royal gala). Triple bill: *Ballet Imperial* by Balanchine, Bintley's *'Still Life' at the Penguin Café*, Macmillan's *Gloria*, Apr 30, May 4,6. *Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066/1911).*

Birmingham Royal Ballet. Triple bill: *Les Sylphides*, *Flowers of the Forest*, *The Green Table*; & Bintley's *The Snow Queen*. Mar 8-13. *New Theatre, Cardiff (0222 394844)*. Mar 15-20. *Apollo, Oxford (0865 244544)*.

Yuri Bashmet series. The dis-

MUSIC

Spring visitors include maestros Leonard Slatkin & Carlo Maria Giulini, for concerts with the Philharmonia; Raymond Leppard & Alexander Dmitriev bring orchestras from Indianapolis & St Petersburg. The Bach Choir celebrates Easter with performances of the St Matthew Passion & John Eliot Gardiner marks the 250th anniversary of *Messiah*.

BARBICAN HALL

Silk St, EC2 (071-6388891).

Festival of Britten. The London Symphony Orchestra's celebration of the works of Benjamin Britten continues with a cello recital by Mstislav Rostropovich, Mar 4, who also conducts the opera *Peter Grimes*, Mar 14,17, takes part in orchestral concerts, Mar 7,18; & conducts the War Requiem, Mar 21, in the Albert Hall. Also films, discussions; & recitals in St Giles, Cripplegate. Until Mar 21.

Evgeny Kissin, piano. Schubert, Brahms, Liszt. Mar 7,4pm.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Charles Mackerras conducts Elgar. Mar 8,7.30pm.

BBC Beethoven/Tippett series. The BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Atherton/Andrew Davis perform the symphonies of Tippett & Beethoven's piano concertos, with pianists Artur Pizarro, Stephen Kovacevich, Mikhail Rudy, John Lill. Mar 2,9,19,23,7.30pm.

I Fiamminghi: the Orchestra of Flanders. UK début of the newly expanded orchestra. Rudolf Werthen conducts Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Beethoven. Mar 10,7.30pm.

St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. Alexander Dmitriev conducts Tchaikovsky, Glazunov, Rachmaninov. Mar 15,7.30pm.

English Chamber Orchestra. Jeffrey Tate conducts Copland, Britten, Barber, Ives. Mar 22,7.30pm.

Yuri Bashmet series. The dis-

tinguished soloist plays Viola Concertos by Bartók, Schnittke, Walton, with the London Symphony Orchestra, & chamber works for viola by Schubert, Schnittke, Shostakovich, Brahms. Mar 25,28, Apr 1,3,7.30pm. **Krystian Zimerman**, piano. Debussy, Chopin, Schubert, Rachmaninov. Apr 4,4pm.

Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

Ivan Fischer conducts Bartók's Piano Concerto, with Andras Schiff, Mozart's German Dances, Haydn's Symphony No 102. Apr 18,7.30pm.

Itzhak Perlman, violin. **Bruno Canino**, piano. Beethoven, Schubert, Stravinsky. Apr 19,7.30pm.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Yehudi Menuhin conducts Bruch's Violin Concerto, with Anna Kanstantsky, Mozart's Symphony No 35, Beethoven's Symphony No 7, Apr 24; Britten's Simple Symphony, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4, with Jeremy Mewhin, Brahms's Symphony No 3, Apr 29; 7.30pm.

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

Music director Raymond Leppard conducts William Schuman's New England Triptych, Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1, with Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Beethoven's Symphony No 7, Apr 30,7.45pm.

FESTIVAL HALL

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-9288800).

Philharmonia Orchestra. Leonard Slatkin conducts Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 3, with Evgeny Kissin, Shostakovich's Symphony No 6, Mar 4; the first performance of Anthony Milner's Oboe Concerto, with John Anderson, Walton's *Bellsazzar's Feast*, Mar 6; 7.30pm.

Alfred Brendel Concerto Series. With the Philharmonia the distinguished pianist is the soloist in works by Bach & Mozart, Mar 9; Haydn & Beethoven, Mar 17; Schumann, Mar 25; 7.30pm.

Bach Choir, English Chamber Orchestra. David Willcocks conducts Haydn's oratorio *The Creation*. Mar 11,7.30pm.

City of Birmingham Symphony



Leonard Slatkin appears with the Philharmonia, Odaline de la Martinez with the European Women's Chamber Orchestra. Limón Dance Company in Brighton.

Orchestra. Simon Rattle continues his Towards the Millennium series conducting Bridge, Britten, & Ravel's *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, Mar 12; Schoenberg, Stravinsky, & Janáček's Glagolitic Mass, Mar 27; 7.30pm.

Philharmonia Orchestra. Yevgeny Svetlanov conducts Beethoven's Triple Concerto, with Joshua Bell, violin, Steven Isserlis, cello, Olli Mustonen, piano, & Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2. Mar 14, 7.30pm.

London Philharmonic. Mariss Jansons conducts Rossini, Rachmaninov, Dvořák, Mar 18; Schoenberg, Shostakovich, Strauss, Mar 21; 7.30pm.

Philharmonia Orchestra. Carlo Maria Giulini conducts Haydn's Symphony No 94, Britten's Serenade for tenor, horn & strings, Dvořák's Symphony No 9 (From the New World). Mar 20, 7.30pm.

Academy of St Martin in the Fields. Neville Marriner conducts Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, Mozart's Mass in C minor. Mar 23, 7.30pm.

San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Herbert Blomstedt conducts the first British performance of Harbison's Oboe Concerto, Bruckner's Symphony No 4 (Romantic). Mar 24, 7.30pm.

Bach Choir, English Chamber Orchestra. David Willcocks conducts Bach's St Matthew Passion (in English). Mar 28, Apr 4, 11am.

London Philharmonic. Gennadi Rozhdestvensky conducts Shostakovich's Violin Concerto, with Salvatore Accardo, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*. Apr 6, 7.30pm.

Alternative Vienna. The London Philharmonic, with London Sinfonietta & Ensemble Modern, explores the music of anti-establishment, anti-academic Viennese composers Kurt Schwertsik & H.K. Gruber, alongside the works of Mahler & others. Apr 15, 17, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30, May 6.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL
South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-9288800).

Paul Crossley continues his series devoted to Debussy's complete piano works. Mar 9, 14, 7.45pm.

Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment play Boccherini to celebrate the 250th anniversary of his birth. Mar 10, 7.45pm.

London Mozart Players. Matthias Bamert conducts Martin, Mozart, Tchaikovsky. Mar 17, 7.45pm.

Kathleen Battle, soprano, sings Mozart, Schumann, Strauss, Bizet, Herbert. Mar 19, 7.45pm.

London Sinfonietta. David Atherton conducts Stravinsky, Berg, Milhaud, Weill. Mar 30, 7.45pm.

Intimate Letters. Three dramatised words & music programmes, with the Medici String Quartet, looking at the lives of great composers through their letters. Mozart, Apr 4; Beethoven, Apr 11; Elgar, May 2; 7.45pm.

European Women's Chamber Orchestra, Pro Musica Chorus. Odaline de la Martinez conducts works by Dame Ethel Smythe. Apr 11, 7.45pm.

Juilliard String Quartet. Haydn, Janáček, Brahms. Apr 14, 7.45pm.

Peter Schreier, tenor, **Charles Spencer,** piano. Schubert's *Die Schöne Müllerin*. Apr 25, 3pm.

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE
Covent Garden, WC2 (071-240 1066).

Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists. John Eliot Gardiner conducts Handel's *Messiah*, to mark the 250th anniversary of the first British performance, conducted by the composer in the first theatre on the Covent Garden site. Mar 23, 7.30pm.

WIGMORE HALL
36 Wigmore St, W1 (071-9352141).

Melvyn Tan, fortepiano. Beethoven. Mar 16, 7.30pm, Apr 4, 11.30am.

Barbara Hendricks, soprano, **Staf-fan Scheja,** piano. Schubert, Fauré, Chausson, Gounod, Bizet, songs. Mar 22, 7.30pm.

Nikolai Demidenko, piano. Early romantics, Mar 24; High romantics, Apr 21; 7.30pm.

Jennifer Larmore, mezzo-soprano, **John Constable,** piano. Arias & songs by Rossini, Handel, Massenet, Fauré, Gounod. Mar 28, 7pm.

FESTIVALS

From Brighton's 450 events in 24 days to the intimately scaled early music festivities centred on Beverley Minster, there is something for all tastes & ages.

BEVERLEY EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Purcell's opera *The Fairy Queen* performed by the Gabrieli Consort & Players. A grand tour of the European courts by Florilegium. Events for children. Tudor archery show. May 6-9. *Box office: Guildhall, Register Sq, Beverley HU17 9AU (0428 867430)*.

BRIGHTON FESTIVAL

Moscow Chamber Opera makes its UK début; City of Birmingham Touring Opera performs Rameau's *Les Boréades*; Tapestry Music Theatre from Canada presents *Nigredo Hotel*. Limón Dance Company brings contemporary work from the USA. Siobhan Davies launches a new ballet. Concerts, plays, films, exhibitions. May 7-30. *Box office: 111 Church St, Brighton BN1 1UD (0273 676926)*.

BURY ST EDMUNDS FESTIVAL

An exhibition at the new Manor House Museum displays how Constable, Gainsborough, Spencer & others depicted the Suffolk landscape. Concerts by the Philharmonia, under Sinopoli; recital by cellist Steven Isserlis & pianist Melvyn Tan. May 13-29. *Box office: Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1XB (0284 769505)*.

NEWBURY SPRING FESTIVAL

Two concerts by the Hallé Orchestra mark the Tchaikovsky centenary. Recitals by Ieuau Jones, harp; Peter Donohoe, piano; Evelyn Glennie, percussion. George Melly lectures on surrealism, dada & Magritte. May 8-22. *Box office: Suite 3, Town Hall, Newbury, Berks RG14 5AA (0635 49919)*.

SHEFFIELD CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Lindsay String Quartet celebrate the English tradition with pianist Peter Frankl, Domus piano quartet & folk musician Alistair Anderson. May 8-22. *Box office: Crucible Theatre, Norfolk St, Sheffield S1 1DA (0742 769922)*.

EXHIBITIONS

The Queen's Gallery opens a new show of Dutch, Flemish & Italian masters. Elsewhere a French flavour dominates: at the Courtauld Institute are paintings by Eugène-Louis Boudin, the National Gallery is showing 100 works from the museum of Lille, & the Royal Academy assembles early paintings by Georges Rouault.

AGNEW'S
43 Old Bond St, W1 (071-629 6176).

Annual Watercolour Exhibition. Includes works by Palmer, Turner & Gainsborough. Mar 8-Apr 2.

Bernard Dunstan RA. Views of Venice, portraits & nude studies. Mar 24-Apr 16.

Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm, Thurs until 6.30pm, Apr 8 until 1pm. Closed Apr 9 & 12.

BARBICAN ART GALLERY
Barbican Centre, EC2 (071-638 4141).

The 60s: Art Scene in London. The extraordinary styles & techniques that exploded on the London art scene between 1957 & the late 1960s. Works by Caro, Riley, Kitaj, Blake & others. Mar 11-June 13. Mon-Sat 10am-6.45pm, Tues until 5.45; Sun, & Apr 9 & 12, noon-6.45pm. £4.50, concessions £2.50.

Concourse gallery:

Adrian Berg: A Sense of Place. Oils & watercolours by this distinguished landscape painter. Mar 9-Apr 17. Mon-Sat 10am-7.30pm; Sun, & Apr 9 & 12, noon-7.30pm. Closed Mar 17.

BATTERSEA TOWN HALL
Lavender Hill, SW11 (information 071-2280741).

Battersea Contemporary Art Fair. Painters, sculptors & printmakers sell direct to the public. Apr 3, 4. Sat 11am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm. £2, concessions £1.

BRITISH MUSEUM
Great Russell St, WC1 (071-636 1555).

Howard Carter: Before Tutankhamun. The colourful life of the



Braque prints on show at the Tate. Retrospective for Georgia O'Keeffe at the Hayward. Paintings from the Bowes Museum come to the National Gallery.

Egyptologist who discovered the treasures of the pharaoh's tomb. Until May 31. £3, concessions £2.

Britain's First View of China. The findings of Earl Macartney's expedition to the Peking Court between 1792 & 1794. Until Apr 4.

The Art of Watercolour. A selection from the Royal Watercolour Society's 800-strong collection of paintings & drawings on long-term loan to the museum. Until Apr 25.

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.30-6pm. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

JONATHAN COOPER

Park Walk Gallery, 20 Park Walk, SW10 (071-3510410).

Pamela Stagg. Botanical paintings by an artist who has been awarded an RHS gold medal for her delicate studies of flowers. Apr 14-30. Mon-Fri 10am-6.30pm, Sat 11am-4pm.

COURTAULD INSTITUTE

Somerset House, Strand, WC2 (071-873 2526).

Boudin at Trouville. Paintings by the father of French Impressionism during visits to the Normandy seaside between the 1860s & his death in 1898. Mar 16-May 2.

New Beginnings: post-war

British art from the collection of Ken Powell. Includes works by Eduardo Paolozzi, Reg Butler & Terry Frost. Apr 28-June 13. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. £3, concessions £1.50.

HAYWARD GALLERY

South Bank Centre, SE1 (071-2610127).

Gravity & Grace: the changing condition of sculpture 1965-75. Sixty classic works by Beuys, Long, Merz, Serra & others. Until Mar 14.

Georgia O'Keeffe: American & modern. Large flower paintings & haunting landscapes of America's south-west in this first retrospective outside the United States for the painter who died in 1986. Apr 8-June 27.

James Turrell. Three specially created light installations by an innovative American artist, plus models, drawings & photographs of a project

he is creating within a volcano in Arizona. Apr 8-June 27.

Daily 10am-6pm, Tues, Wed until 8pm. £5, concessions £3.50. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Lambeth Rd, SE1 (071-4165000).

Forces' Sweethearts. Rings, lockets, poems & letters display wartime romance from the First World War to the Gulf. Until Oct 15. Daily 10am-6pm. £3.50, concessions £1.75.

KEW GARDENS GALLERY

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Surrey (081-9401171).

Treasures of the Royal Horticultural Society. Major exhibition drawn from the Society's collection of 18,000 botanical paintings & drawings. Apr 7-May 31. Daily 9.30am-4.30pm. Admission to gardens £3.50, concessions £1.80, children £1.30.

MUSEUM OF LONDON

London Wall, EC2 (071-6003699).

The Purple, White & Green. A re-evaluation of the suffragettes in London from 1906 to 1914. Until June 13. Tues-Sat, & Apr 12 & May 3, 10am-6pm; Sun 2-6pm.

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

South Bank, SE1 (071-9283535).

Méliès: father of film fantasy. The work of Georges Méliès, turn-of-the-century magician & film-maker. Until June 12. Daily 10am-6pm. £5.50, students £4.70, children £4.

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Royal Hospital Rd, SW3 (071-730 0717).

Dawson's Army. Watercolours & drawings by Eric Dawson who, as a young art student, was called upon to record scenes from the North Africa campaign. Until May 31. Daily 10am-5.30pm. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

NATIONAL GALLERY

Trafalgar Sq, WC2 (071-8393321).

Sainsbury wing:

Tradition & Revolution in French Art 1700-1880: paintings & drawings from Lille. More than 100 paintings by Delacroix, Géricault, Courbet, Sisley & others drawn from one of France's greatest provincial

museums. Mar 24-July 11. £4, concessions £2. Extended opening hours Wed until 8pm, Sun from noon.

Sunley room:

Brief Encounters: Robert Campin. Two related works of the Virgin & Child by this early Netherlandish painter, one on loan from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Until Mar 28.

Paintings from the Bowes Museum. El Greco, Boucher, Goya & Primaticcio are among artists represented in this highly respected collection from County Durham. Apr 28-June 20.

Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM

Greenwich, SE10 (081-8584422).

Pirates. Return of last year's exhibition devoted to marauders of fact & fiction, from Blackbeard to today's predators of the Far Eastern seas. Apr 6-Sept 5. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm. Sun noon-6pm. £3.75, concessions £2.75. Old Royal Observatory:

Longitude Zero. Newly refurbished, Christopher Wren's observatory contains an exploration of time, space, astronomy, the Meridian & the observatory's own history. Opens Mar 24. Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2-5pm. £3.50, concessions £2.50; from Apr 1 £3.75 & £2.75.

THE QUEEN'S GALLERY

Buckingham Palace Rd, SW1 (071-799 2331).

A King's Purchase: King George III and the collection of Consul Smith. A selection from more than 500 paintings by Dutch, Flemish & Italian masters, sold to George III in 1762 for £20,000. Mar 5-Dec 23.

Tues-Sat, & Apr 12 & May 3, 10am-5pm; Sun 2-5pm. £2.50, OAPs £1.80, children £1.20. Closed Apr 9.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Piccadilly, W1 (071-4397438).

The Great Age of British Watercolours, 1750-1880. The developments in status & technique of this art form, seen in the works of Turner, Blake, Constable, Palmer, Cotman &

others. Until Apr 12. £5, concessions £3.40.

Georges Rouault: the early years 1903-20. Portrayals of prostitutes, circus performers & lawyers characterise this part of the artist's career. Mar 11-June 6. £4 & £2.70.

Daily 10am-6pm. Advance booking on 071-2407200. Closed Apr 9.

RAF MUSEUM

Grahame Park Way, Hendon, NW9 (081-2052266).

The Man Who Was Biggles. Exhibition celebrating the centenary of the birth of W.E. Johns, pilot, illustrator & creator of fiction's most celebrated aviator. Until May 2. Daily 10am-6pm. £4.50, concessions £2.25.

TATE GALLERY

Millbank, SW1 (071-8211313).

Robert Ryman. Works by one of America's foremost abstract painters, renowned for his "white" paintings. Until Apr 25. £3, concessions £1.50.

Robert Vernon's Gift. British paintings & sculptures given to the nation by their collector in 1847. Mar 15-Nov.

Georges Braque: prints. More than 90 items from private collections in Paris show a neglected aspect of this modern master. Mar 24-June 27.

Mon-Sat 10am-5.50pm, Sun 2-5.50pm. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM

Cromwell Rd, SW7 (071-9388500).

Ceramic Contemporaries. More than 200 objects by young ceramists. Mar 10-31.

The Winning Hand. Designs for playing-cards from a competition for Britain's graphic design students. Until Apr 12.

Mon noon-5.50pm, Tues-Sun 10am-5.50pm. Voluntary donation, suggested £3.50, concessions £1. Closed Apr 9 & May 3.

WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY

Whitechapel High St, E1 (071-377 0107).

Susana Solano. Sculptures in industrial materials by a new-wave Spanish artist. Mar 12-May 2. Tues-Sun 11am-5pm, Wed until 8pm.

GENERAL



Blues on parade: Oxford meets Cambridge for the 139th University Boat Race.

SPORT

April sees the return of Formula 1 racing to the Donington Park circuit for the first time since 1938. Gruelling marathons test the world's athletes in London, canoeists on the Thames & horses & riders at Badminton.

ATHLETICS

NutraSweet London Marathon. Apr 18. Starts Greenwich Park, SE10 & Blackheath, SE3; finishes Westminster Bridge, SW1.

CANOEING

Devizes to Westminster International Race. Apr 9-12. Starts Devizes, Wilts; finishes Apr 12 from 9am, Westminster Bridge, SW1.

CRICKET

Essex v England A. Apr 22-25. Chelmsford, Essex.

EQUESTRIANISM

Badminton Horse Trials for the Mitsubishi Motors Trophy. May 6-9. Badminton, Avon.

Royal Windsor Horse Show & Driving Trials. May 12-16. Windsor, Berks.

GOLF

Benson & Hedges Open Tournament. May 6-9. St Mellion, Cornwall.

HORSE RACING

Cheltenham Festival (including Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup Mar 18). Mar 16-18. Cheltenham, Glos.

Martell Grand National. Apr 3. Aintree, nr Liverpool.

MOTOR SPORT

Grand Prix of Europe. Apr 11. Donington Park, Derbys.

ROWING

Beefeater Gin Oxford & Cambridge Boat Race. Mar 27, 3.15pm. Starts Putney, SW15; finishes Mortlake, SW14.

RUGBY UNION

Save & Prosper International: England v Scotland. Mar 6. Twickenham, Middx.

Wales v Ireland. Mar 6. Cardiff.

Ireland v England. Mar 20. Dublin.

France v Wales. Mar 20. Paris.

OTHER EVENTS

The streets of Westminster are the setting for scenes from Tony Harrison's passion play on Good Friday. St George's Day, two weeks later, will be celebrated with music & pageantry at the Albert Hall.

British Antique Dealers' Association Antiques Fair. Furniture, glass, clocks, needlework & jewellery. May 5-11. Wed 11am-5.30pm; Thurs, Fri, Mon 11am-8pm; Sat, Sun, Tues 11am-6pm. **Duke of York's Headquarters**, King's Rd, SW3. £9 (double ticket £15), includes catalogue.

The Crucifixion. Good Friday street performance of scenes from Tony Harrison's play *The Passion*, involving church leaders of all denominations, actors & local dignitaries. "Jesus" is arrested outside Westminster Abbey at 11.45am; the "road to Calvary" leads along Victoria St to Westminster Cathedral for the spectacular "trial" at 12.25pm, followed by a procession to Central Hall for the "Last Supper" & ending with the "crucifixion" outside Westminster Abbey at 2.10pm. Proceeds from collections go to organisations for London's homeless. Apr 9. **Westminster & Victoria, SW1**.

Gun Salute. The King's Troop fires a 41-gun salute in honour of the Queen's birthday. Apr 21, noon. **Hyde Park** (opposite Dorchester Hotel), W1.

London Harness Horse Parade. The capital's impeccably groomed working horses step out in style. Apr 12, 9am. **Regent's Park, NW1**.

London International Book Fair. The latest books out for spring, & a chance to meet contemporary authors in a show with a European theme. Mar 21-23. Daily 9.30am-6.30pm. **Olympia, W14**. Tickets £5 in advance (081-948 9899) or £10 at the door.

St George's Day Festival. A promenade through English history in music, drama & verse, for cancer charities. Apr 23, 7.30pm. **Albert Hall, SW7** (071-589 8212). £5-£40.

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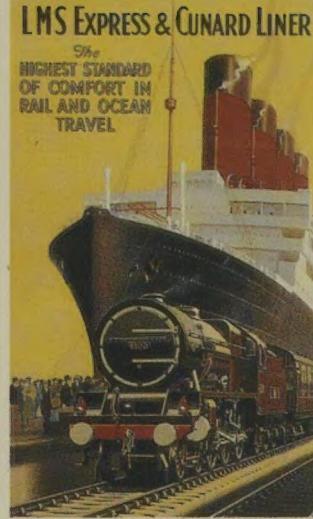
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The garden at Beauregard, left, above Lac Léman; from The Secret Gardens of France, by Mirabel Osler (Pavilion, £16.99).

Right, Elisabeth Frink, a portrait by Zsuzsi Roboz reproduced in her book British Art Now, written with Edward Lucie-Smith (Art Books International, £25). Far right, 1920s poster from Ocean Steamers, a history of passenger steamships from 1820 to 1970 by John Adams (New Cavendish Books, £35).



BOOK CHOICE

Some selected books for spring reading

HARDBACK NON-FICTION

Churchill: The End of Glory

by John Charmley

Hodder & Stoughton, £30

John Charmley presents what can only be described as the revisionist view of Churchill's life, detailing all the faults and mistakes and culminating with the argument that by prolonging the war when there was an opportunity of making peace the great man, in effect, unwittingly brought about the decline of Britain as a world power and the liquidation of the British Empire. The argument is well presented but fails to convince because the author assumes Hitler could have been relied upon to abide by the terms of any treaty he signed.

Nixon: A Life

by Jonathan Aitken

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £25

Richard Nixon, whose presidency and reputation were wrecked by the ludicrous Watergate break-in, is a complex man whose career should have been the stuff of American dreams. He climbed the political ladder from the bottom, with no money and no influential friends to help him up. He was a senator in his 30s and President in his 50s. Jonathan Aitken explains what went wrong politically but is not so successful in revealing the full nature of the man who was largely responsible for his own downfall.

Elizabeth Gaskell: A Habit of Stories

by Jenny Uglow

Faber, £20

The charm of its subject pervades this entertaining biography. Jenny Uglow wisely allows Mrs Gaskell to portray much of her own character through her sharp and lively letters. Writing—she began her first novel after the deaths of three of her seven children—and irrepressible humour seem to have conquered the many unhappinesses of her life, and that quality infects the pages of this book.

HARDBACK FICTION

No Other Life

by Brian Moore

Bloomsbury, £14.99

Father Paul Michel is a Canadian and a Catholic priest who teaches on a Caribbean island that has many similarities to Graham Greene's *Haiti*. Father Paul's growing doubt about his faith also invades Greene's well-worn territory, but Brian Moore's concerns are very different. His writing is equally potent and, like all his books, *No Other Life* is a fast, compelling read. In fact the reader will need consciously to slow down if he is to appreciate the novel's real subtleties and significance.

Memories of the Ford Administration

by John Updike

Hamish Hamilton, £15.99

A history professor at a women's college in New Hampshire is invited by the Northern New Hampshire Association of American Historians to contribute to a symposium on the Ford administration. The result is a very personal account, mingling the unhappy professor's memories of his own promiscuous youth with his unpublished manuscript of the life of President Buchanan. This leaves little room for memories of the Ford administration, but provides Updike with the setting for a satirical novel that ranks among his finest.

Lost Footsteps

by Bel Mooney

Viking, £14.99

Bel Mooney's new novel describes how a Romanian mother seizes a chance to send her 10-year-old son to freedom in Germany rather than risk his brutalisation by the corrupt Ceaușescu régime. She intends to follow him, but is caught and sent to prison. The overthrow of Ceaușescu brings new hope, and she sets out to follow her son through the labyrinthine network of international refugees. It is a moving story powerfully told.

PAPERBACK NON-FICTION

London: A Literary Companion

by Peter Vansittart

John Murray, £11.99

There are too many Londons for any reader to be totally satisfied with any one anthology. The author of this literary companion wisely contents himself with a personal choice, geared as he says to his own limitations and very largely to his own library. Fortunately his tastes are eclectic enough to provide many known and less-known words about many known and less-known parts of London.

Stephen Hawking

by Michael White & John Gribbin

Penguin, £6.99

This is the story of the brilliant Cambridge student of physics who has long and relentlessly struggled against the incurable motor neuron disease that struck him down at the age of 20. His subsequent scientific achievements are set out in terms that laymen will readily understand. His courage needs no exposition.

Hong Kong

by Jan Morris

Penguin, £6.99

Ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, and destined now to be returned to China in 1997, Hong Kong needs sympathetic understanding. Jan Morris is the perfect guide and mentor, and for this new paperback edition the implications of Chris Patten's appointment as Governor and the consequences of the Tiananmen Square massacre are added.

The Journals

by John Cheever

Vintage, £7.99

The American novelist kept a journal for the last 40 years of his life, and this selection, edited by Robert Gottlieb, reveals what an unhappy life it was. Alcoholism, covert homosexuality and, towards the end, cancer, added to the more usual problems of the creative writer, form a big part of these grim but gripping journals.

PAPERBACK FICTION

The Birthday Boys

by Beryl Bainbridge

Penguin, £5.99

The boys in this inspired novel are the five men, led by Captain Scott, who struggled to the South Pole and perished on the way back, having learnt that the tough and better-organised Amundsen had beaten them to it. Scott's reputation has suffered from recent revelations of his inadequacies, but this story, told in turn by each of the five, is concerned with the human aspects of the drama.

Hideous Kinky

by Esther Freud

Penguin, £5.99

This is an original and impressive first novel. Set in the 1960s, it describes a young English mother's voyage along the hippie trail to Marrakesh, seen through the clear eyes of one of her two daughters, then aged five.

Indigo

by Marina Warner

Vintage, £5.99

Miranda is a descendant of the 17th-century conqueror of a Caribbean island, and this intricate novel describes the conflict between her present life and her cultural background. The narrative moves between colonial past and newly-independent present, between reality and fantasy, between Marina Warner's imagination and that of Shakespeare's *Tempest*—a heady combination which at times threatens to sink the story.

Unsweet Charity

by Keith Waterhouse

Sceptre, £5.99

This stylish comic novel packs a hefty punch on the jaw of charity fundraising. Residents of Badger's Heath, a not untypical middle-class community in southern England, devote much of their time and energies to raising money for innumerable worthy causes, and never seem to be without a karaoke marathon, a sponsored fun run or banana-skin week.

Contrasting Colours in a Green Paradise

To visit Turkey is to experience many worlds. A paradise of harmonising colours, drawn from the beginning of time.

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Turkey is a mosaic of innate beauty.

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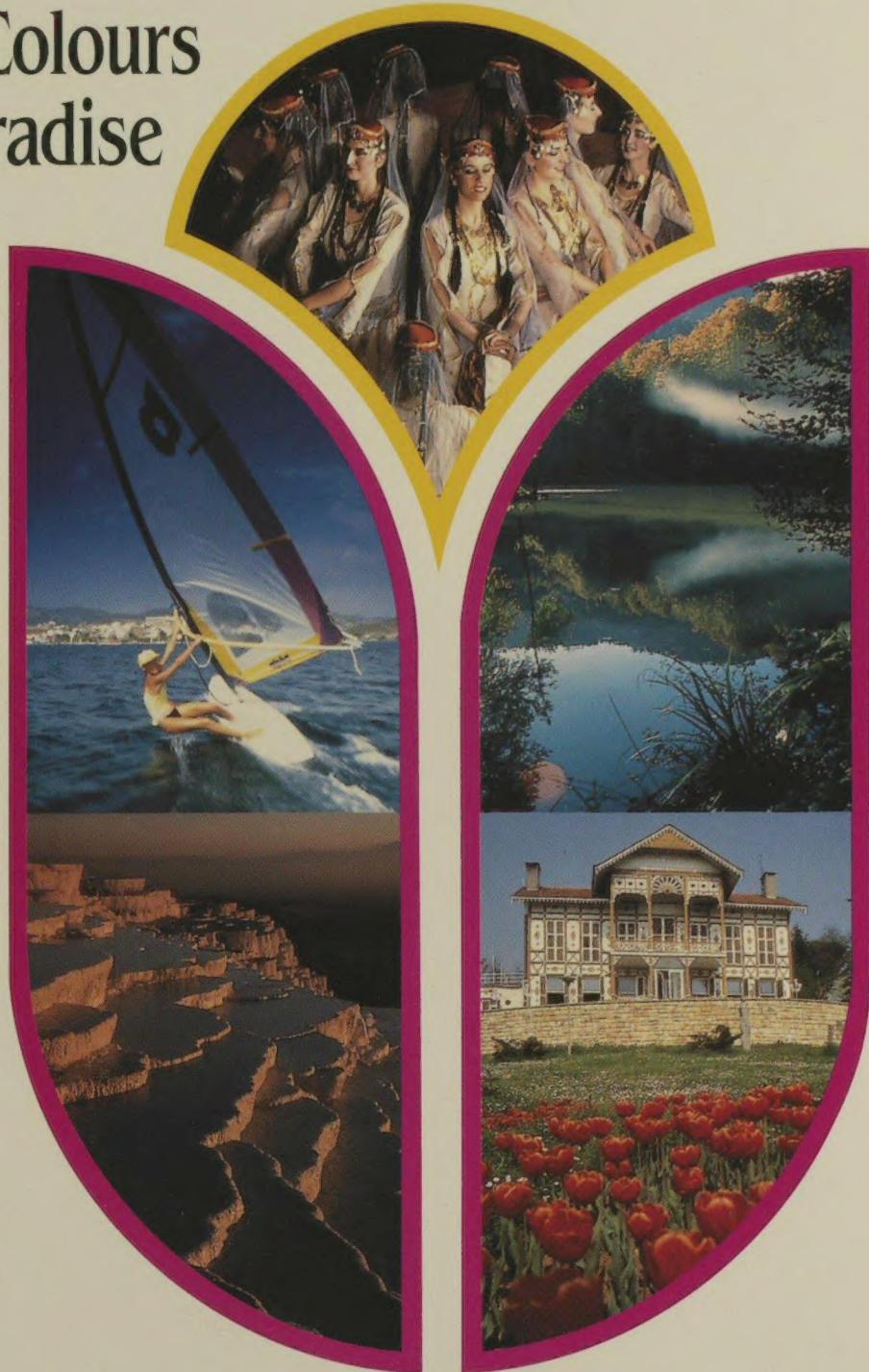
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For Turkey is a country with a deep desire to safeguard its natural heritage, both man-made and living. Environmental programmes and National Reserves protect vegetation and wildlife, such as flamingo breeding grounds and the unique natural habitat of Caretta Caretta, the loggerhead turtle. Strict architectural laws assure new buildings reflect care and concern for the past.

Turkey too, is a sophisticated centre of cultural and sporting activities. From ballet, opera and theatre to paragliding, snow skiing, wind surfing, and rafting.

Yet perhaps the greatest joy is the people themselves. A genuine warmth and friendliness is open to all who visit.

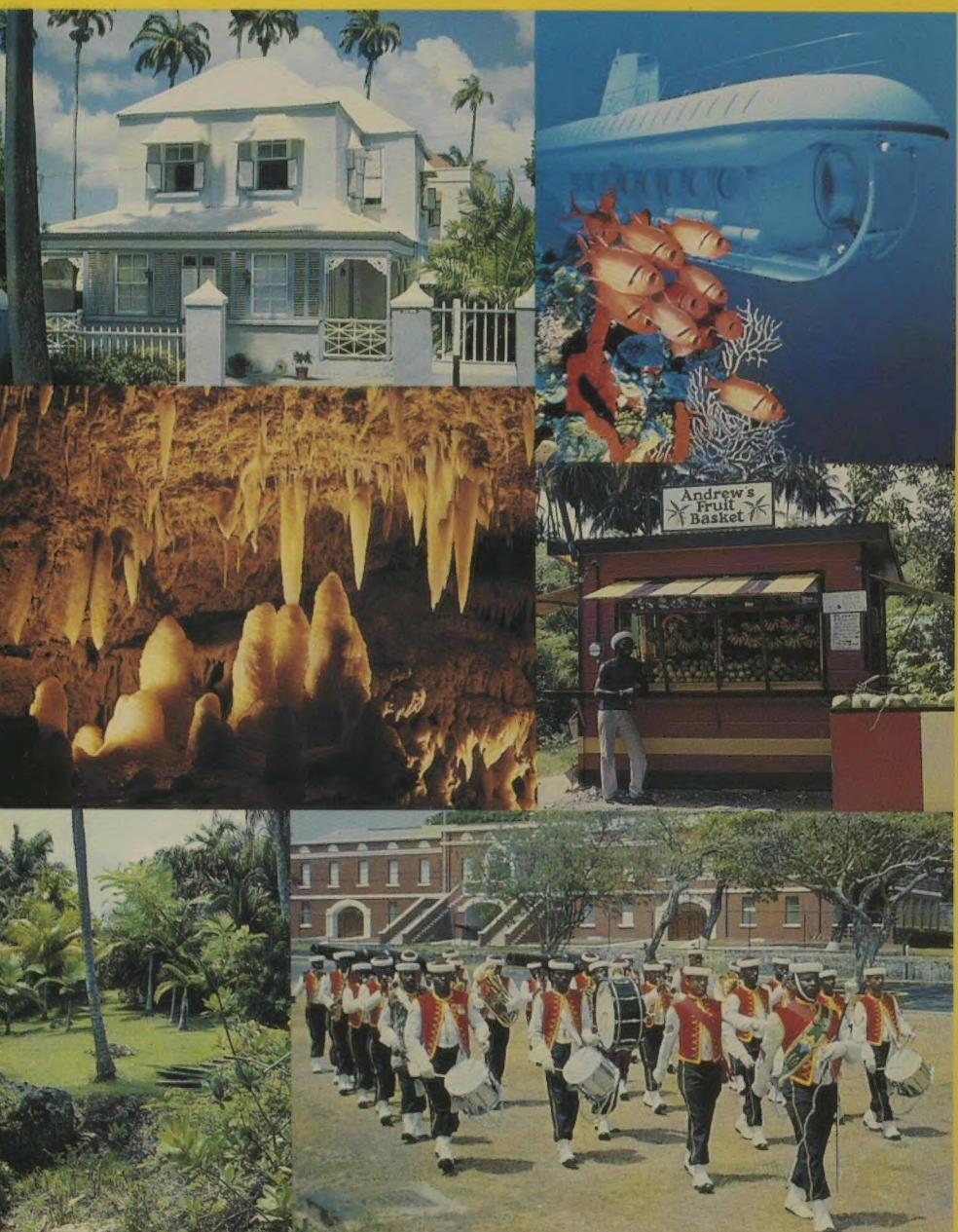
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TURKEY

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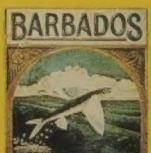
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